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THE AUTHOR

HENRY C. WRIGHT

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THE

UNWELCOME CHILD;

OR,

THE CRIME OF AN UNDESIGNED AND UNDESIRED

MATERNITY.

By HENRY C. WRIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "MARRIAGE AND PARENTAGE."

FOURTH THOUSAND.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY BELA MARSH,

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PREFACE.

MATERNITY, the relation that leads to it, and the responsibilities, anxieties, and agonies generally connected with it, — the right of Woman to decide for herself when she shall assume the responsibilities, and be subjected to the sufferings, of Maternity, and to the relation in which it originates, — Man, without regard to the wishes and conditions of his wife, heedless of the physical and spiritual welfare of his offspring, and solely for his own gratification, imposing on his wife Maternity, with all its attendant anguish of body and soul, — the crime of earth, — the greatest outrage one human being can perpetrate on another, — ante-natal murder, — the ante-natal history of a human being, and its bearing on his post-natal character and destiny, in the body and out of it, — such are the topics which are presented and discussed in the following pages.

The author has aimed so to present these subjects that no intelligent and pure-minded man or woman need to misunderstand or misconstrue his meaning, or be offended by his words and modes of expression. These subjects belong to the holy of holies of human existence. With them is associated all that is nearest and dearest to the heart of man and woman. In the inmost sanctuary of Home, these should be the topics of freest and most anxious conversation. All that is pure, lovely, beautiful, and ennobling, in the relations of Husband and Wife, and Parent and Child, is directly connected with these subjects, and the views entertained of them by men and women in and out of legal marriage. But that which transpires during the period between conception and birth, as the foundation of character in the future man or woman, as an index to their thoughts, feelings, plans, motives, actions, to their virtues and vices, to successes and failures in life's conflict, has been entirely overlooked by biographers and historians, by poets and novelists, in their efforts to delineate human life as manifested in individuals, or in civil and ecclesiastical combinations.

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Yet all admit that physical, intellectual, and social tendencies and conditions are organized into the body and soul of every child, during that period, that must give tone and direction to the man or woman in all their future life. In their relations as husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors, in all their commercial, social, civil, and ecclesiastical relations, their feelings, and their treatment of all with whom they may be associated, must depend greatly on these ante-natal influences and tendencies.

The life of every good man and the life of every bad man, the life of a teetotaller and the life of a drunkard, a life of love and a life of hatred, a life of forgiveness and a life of revenge, a life of truth, justice, and purity, and a life of falsehood, injustice, and impurity, the life of Jesus and the life of Napoleon, — who can determine to what extent all these have been, are, or will be, controlled by birthright tendencies, and by influences that, before they were born, bore upon those who live these lives? Certain it is that, to a great extent, the diseases, suffer-

ings, and premature deaths, and many of the individual, social, governmental, and ecclesiastical thefts, robberies, and murders, committed in the post-natal state of our being, are but the natural, if not the necessary results of these ante-natal organic and constitutional conditions and tendencies.

To all Husbands and Wives, to all Fathers and Mothers, and to all who hope to enter into these most ennobling and most potent of all human relations, are the following pages earnestly commended, by

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

A Husband to Henry C. Wright.

Boston, January 10, 1857.

My dear Friend:

It is twenty years since I first heard you discourse on the Mission and Relation of the Sexes. You stated then, in substance, that the sexes had power, each over the other, to save or to destroy; that all rational hope of the elevation and perfection of human nature must rest upon a knowledge of, and obedience to, the laws of Nature, designed to govern those relations; that man must look to *generation*, rather than to *re*generation, to bring the race into perfect union and harmony with the Divine; that no power could save either man or woman, in isolation from, or in false relations with, each other; and that if either sinks or rises, the other must follow.

I was but a boy when I first heard you utter such sentiments. I did not then understand their full import. They had not entered into the experience of my inner or outer life. Yet I took the impression, that woman would be to man just what he chose and had power to make her; and that it depended on man to say whether woman should be to him a purifying and ennobling influence, or a source of degradation and ruin.

From that time I had a desire, so far as woman is concerned, to place myself in such relations to her, that her influence on my life might be pure and ennobling. I have studied to get clear and definite views of my nature and needs as a man, and how woman can most perfectly accomplish her mission of love and salvation to me.

I am now a husband; made so, not by any enactment, ceremony or license of Church or State (though my marriage is placed upon record, as an historical fact); nor by the consent of any third party; nor by any formal contract or bargain between me and the woman to whom I hold this relation; but by a law or necessity of my being; by a power, unseen, but ever present, and ever potent to guide, like that which binds the needle to the pole, or the soul to God.

All that qualifies me to be a husband and a father, I have consecrated to the development and happiness of my wife, and of the children who may result from our union. I have done this, not because she demands it as her right, but solely because I find in myself a necessity for so doing. She makes no demands on me as a right; she asks of me only what I feel the necessity of giving. My love for her gives me no rights over her property, her person, or her affections. It makes no demands on her, as a right, but it makes great demands on my own manhood. True conjugal love never creates rights over the loved one, but necessities in the one who loves. This necessity is laid upon me, not by any arbitrary decree of Church or State, but solely by the concentrated, exclusive love, which, as a husband, I bear to my wife. The purity and dignity of my nature are involved in my yielding to this necessity.

I would consecrate my manhood to the perfection and happiness of my wife, and of the children who may be born of our union, in the home which, by our united efforts, we hope to

create. Your conversation with me, as a boy and a youth, and your counsel, have been invaluable in the regulation of my life in my relations with women. I have read your work, entitled "MARRIAGE AND PARENTAGE; or, the Reproductive Element in Man as a Means of his Elevation and Happiness." To us, in the home of our love, your teachings will ever be as divine oracles, to regulate our relations as husband and wife. We would embody in our lives your "ERNEST" and "NINA," especially in regard to parentage, and the relation that leads to it; believing that those who do actualize that ideal husband and wife, cannot fail to receive a divine reward, in an ever-growing and an ever-ennobling love and trust. To that husband who shall embody your Ernest, the love, the respect and trust of his wife, will be as the sun and dew of heaven to the opening buds of spring; they will expand and beautify his manly soul, and cause his manhood to give out all its beauty and fragrance, and shed a bright and steady light on the pathway of his wife, and bring enduring rest to her heart in the home of her wedded love. We would live in and for each other, and in and for our offspring. We would be represented in the great human family by those whom we shall be proud to call our children, and whom all of human kind shall feel honored to recognize as brothers and sisters. We would not see our nature degraded, nor our glory tarnished, in ourselves or our posterity, but we would see that glory made brighter, and that nature more noble.

I know that on the government of my passional relations with my wife depends her health and life of body and soul, the health of our children, and the beauty and happiness of our home. I know, if she ever is made to fear my passion, and to shrink from the personal intimacies of her husband, home, from that hour, becomes desolate and repulsive, no matter what may be the natural or artistic elegance of our material surroundings. I

know that in proportion as she cherishes a loving and trusting respect for all that constitutes me a man, will she lovingly and calmly rest in the bosom of her husband; and that the most sacred sanctuary of our home, instead of being an altar of cruel and merciless sacrifice of her health and life, will be a fountain of eternal life and peace to us both,—a temple consecrated to all true manifestations of an unselfish conjugal and parental love.

I feel the responsibility that rests upon me. I would have my wife associate my manhood with her own purity, and not with my selfish gratification. I would have her assured that my nature, as a man, is under the control of conscience and reason, and held in subjection to her perfect development, and that of our children. I would be an unselfish, noble husband, and a true and happy father; a husband and father who can stand in the pride and dignity of conscious nobility before his wife and children. I would be a MAN; one whose soul, vitalized and ennobled by the presence and power of conjugal and paternal love, shall never cower before its own consciousness, nor in the presence of its God.

If you can give me your thoughts and feelings in regard to parentage, and the relation that leads to it, you will confer a favor on one whose love and respect for you will never end.

Yours,

A HUSBAND.

THE

CRIME OF AN UNDESIRED MATERNITY.

Letters to a Husband.

LETTER I.

THE MOTHER'S POWER OVER HER CHILD.

MY FRIEND:

I HAVE read your letter with deep interest. Your inquiries respecting the mission of the sexes, and the government of your passional relations with your wife, seem right and proper, and what every man, who would secure and perpetuate the love and respect of his wife, and the purity and happiness of his home, will make, and on which, above all other subjects, he will seek for light. They shall receive frank and candid answers, so far as I can give them. I thank you for proposing them, as, in answering, I shall take occasion to give my views on a subject which, of all others, most directly concerns the organization and development, the character and destiny of the men and women of the future, and which

involves the purity and peace of home, and the growth and prosperity of society.

Here let me say, that on no subject should a man and woman, as they are being attracted into conjugal relations, be more open and truthful with each other than on this. No woman, who would save herself and the man she loves from a desecrated and wretched home, should enter into the physical relations of marriage with a man until she understands what he expects of her as to the function of maternity, and the relation that leads to it. If a woman is made aware that the man who would win her as a wife regards her and the marriage relation only as the means of a legalized gratification of his passions, and she sees fit to live with him as a wife, with such a prospect before her, she must take the consequences of a course so degrading and so shameless. If she sees fit to make an offering of her body and soul on the altar of her husband's sensuality, she must do it; but she has a right to know to what base uses her womanhood is to be put; and it is due to her, as well as to himself, that he should tell her beforehand precisely what he wants and expects of her.

Too frequently man shrinks from all allusion, during courtship, to his expectations in regard to future passional relations. He fears to speak of them, lest he should shock and repel the woman he would win as a wife. Being conscious, it may be, of an intention to use the power he may acquire over her person for his own gratification, he shuns all interchange of views with her, lest she should divine the hidden sensualism of his soul, and his intention to victimize her person to it, the mo-

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when wrong exists; to woman belong the suffering and anguish. Woman is the victim; on man rests the responsibility. Woman's appeal is to man to spare her this suffering and anguish, except when her nature calls, and then will she, for his sake and her own, joyfully meet and bear the cross. It is meet that woman's appeal should be sustained. I wish to sustain it; and in so doing, while my remarks will bear mainly on Maternity, Paternity will necessarily come under review. Maternity, when a crime, suggests the questions, Who is the criminal? To what extent is he responsible for the consequences? So, in fact, the whole subject of Parentage is open, as involving the conduct and responsibility of both parents.

But, before proceeding to consider this wrong and outrage upon woman, and its influence on her, I wish to allude to two facts bearing directly on the subject.

1. *That which forms the body and soul of the child must come to it, previous to birth, through the maternal organism.*

Pause, my friend, and contemplate this fact, in its bearings on the birthright tendencies, the character and destiny, of your child. You and your wife wish to have a child. She prepares herself cheerfully and bravely to bear the sufferings and responsibilities of Maternity. The germ, so small when she takes charge of it, in a brief space assumes the form of a human being, and is increased in size and in weight hundreds of thousands of times.

How did the substance reach it which constituted its growth? Every particle of matter that reaches it to

form its brain, its nerves, its heart, its lungs, its blood, its bones and sinews, was prepared in the maternal organism, and was carried to it through the medium of her blood. Whatever is received into her system, in the shape of food, drink, air, and various gases, and which goes to nourish her brain, heart, nerves, and other organs, and keep them in healthful activity, must go to form the corresponding portions of the child's body. The material that nourishes the brain of the mother forms, from the beginning, the brain of the child; that which nourishes the lungs and nerves of the mother forms also the lungs and nerves of the child. So of every organ and portion of the body. From whatever the mother takes into her system must come the body and soul of her child.

2. *This substance, as it passes through the maternal system, must receive the impress of her mental and physical conditions.*

Ponder this fact, see its bearing on the character and destiny of your child, of all children, and of the race, and see if its importance can be over-estimated. That it is a fact, in the science of Embryology and Fœtal Development, is not denied. Whatever *temporarily* affects the maternal blood, must *permanently* affect the organic conditions and constitutional tendencies, and of course the post-natal character and destiny, of the child. This is much insisted on by writers on the laws and function of reproduction. Thus Carpenter, in his "Principles of Human Physiology," says: "That many of the organic functions are directly influenced by the nervous system, is a matter which does not admit

of dispute,—sometimes in exciting, sometimes in checking, and sometimes in otherwise modifying them."—(Sec. 946.)

Whatever, then, affects the nervous system, affects the organic functions. That the nervous system is deeply affected by the kind and quality of our food and drink, and by mental impressions, cannot be doubted. Witness the influence of tea, alcohol, opium, tobacco, and various kinds of food, on the nerves, and also of anger, grief, revenge, fear, love, hate, &c. As Carpenter says, "The influence of particular conditions of the mind in exciting various secretions is a matter of daily experience." He instances the increased secretion and flow of saliva by the idea of food, the secretion and flow of tears by joy, tenderness, or grief, and the influence of the love of offspring on the mammary secretions.

"The sexual secretions," he says, "are strongly influenced by the conditions of the mind;" instancing the effects of a "fitful temper," "fits of anger," "grief," "anxiety of mind," "fear," "terror," on the mammary secretions, and showing that these emotions often so poison the mother's milk as permanently to affect the health, and sometimes destroy the life of the nursing child.—(Sec. 948.)

Weigh well the following sentiments of Carpenter: "That the mental state of the mother can produce important alterations in her own blood, seems demonstrated by the considerations previously adduced in regard to its effects upon the process of nutrition and secretion, and that such alterations are *sufficient to determine modifications in the developmental pro-*

cesses of the embryo, TO WHICH HER BLOOD FURNISHES THE MATERIAL, can scarcely admit a question, when we recollect what influence the presence or absence of particular substances has in modifying the growth of parts of the adult." In regard to cases where children are marked before birth, he says: "The effect must be produced upon the maternal blood, and *transmitted through it to the fœtus*, since there is no nervous communication between the parent and offspring."

On every hand, life is full of facts illustrative of the influence of the mental and physical conditions of the mother on the organic structure and constitutional tendencies of the body and soul of her unborn child. As the maternal blood is healthfully or otherwise affected by what she eats and drinks, and by her mental conditions, so will the organization of her child be healthful or diseased. If the mass of blood from which the fœtus is nourished and receives its material for growth is filled with disease, from any cause, the child must be similarly affected.

This is a fearful fact, when viewed in its bearing on the post-natal health and happiness of the child, and on the character and destiny of the human family. One can scarcely avoid the query, Is it just to place the destiny of one human being so entirely in the power of another? The power of the mother over her child, previous to birth, is absolute. Through what she eats and drinks, during gestation, she can fix the organic and constitutional tendencies of her child to health or disease, to good or evil, to happiness or misery, and thus

control its character and destiny after it is born, during its infancy, childhood, youth and manhood. Not only through the character of what she eats and drinks, but through her *mental* emotions and conditions, through her amusements, her anxieties, her joys, her sorrows, her loves and hates, her exaltation and depression, her hopes and fears, can she affect the birthright physical and spiritual tendencies of her child, and thus control its destiny. She may doom her child to drunkenness, to lying, to revenge, and make him or her a thief, a liar, a drunkard, a glutton, a miser, a warrior, a slaveholder, a robber, a murderer, a pirate, or an assassin, before its birth, and while it is all unconscious of the doom which the mother is preparing for it, and totally incapable of resisting the fatal influence that is shaping its destiny.

The mother has a fearful power. It is absolute for good or evil. Terrible is the doom of that child whose organization and development, before birth, were controlled by the mother's ignorance, folly, or hatred. Emphatically, as she is true to herself, she is true to her unborn child. It seems a mystery that the character and destiny of a human being should so materially depend on the food, drink, thoughts, feelings and passions of the mother during that brief period; but such is the fact, and we can only bow in silence to the fiat of God, being assured that whatever power the mother has for evil, she has the same for good; and that the question whether she shall use that power for good or evil over her child is one which may be settled mainly, if not solely, by the father, as will hereafter be shown. I will only say here, that the answer to the question, Will the

mother use her power over her child for good or for evil? depends on the answer to a previous question — Is her maternity a willing or unwilling one? This question it is generally in the power of the husband and father to answer.

Now, my friend, contemplate the bearing of these two facts on the post-natal character and destiny of your child. The germ is placed in the maternal system, there to be nourished and to be developed through the substances conveyed to it by the maternal blood. Whatever the mother eats and drinks directly affects the nutrition and organization of her child. Whatever thoughts, feelings and passions agitate her mind, leave their traces on that which goes to form its body and soul. How important, then, to the health, character and happiness, of the future man or woman, that the mother, during gestation, should receive into her system only the purest and most healthful food and drink, and into her mind only bright, cheerful, happy, peaceful thoughts and feelings! To her husband, woman looks for sympathy and support to enable her truly and bravely to meet this great demand upon her nature. She should be encircled by a tender, consecrating love. To the father of her child she looks for this. Shall she look in vain, or be left to bear the cross alone?

Thine,

HENRY C. WRIGHT.

LETTER II.

THE CRIME AGAINST THE MOTHER.—HOW IT AFFECTS HER TOWARDS THE FATHER OF HER CHILD.

My Friend:

Before considering the wrong done to the mother, I would state two points which I shall take for granted:

1. That parents, alone, are responsible for the *existence* of their children.

2. That woman, alone, has a right to say when, and under what circumstances, she shall assume the office of maternity, or subject herself to the *liability* of becoming a mother.

These two positions seem to me so self-evident, that no arguments can make them more clear and certain. Who is responsible for the *existence* of children, God or the parents? Who shall say how many children a woman shall have, and under what circumstances she shall have them, the wife or the husband? Who shall say how often, for what purposes, and under what conditions, the wife shall subject her person to a relation which renders her *liable* to become a mother, and to the suffering and anguish of developing and giving birth to a child? To ask these questions is to answer them. Nature makes but one reply, and that will be found in the conscious-

ness of every true husband and wife, and father and mother.

What is the influence of an undesired maternity on the mother, in regard to the father of her child? is my first inquiry. What is it? It is felt, but seldom spoken. It cannot be expressed in words, as it is felt in the heart.

A woman comes into the relation of a legal wife. At once, it may be, the husband reveals himself to her in a way she did not anticipate, and she is made to know what he expects of her, and for what he married her. She yields her person to his passion, not in obedience to a call in her own nature, but because she thinks that such is the right conferred by law and custom on the husband over the wife. She has, it may be, been duly taught that the only way to secure and strengthen his love is to yield to his passion, whenever it demands indulgence. So she yields, and before she is aware, and before her mind is prepared to meet them, the responsibilities, anxieties and sufferings of maternity are upon her. Grief, anguish, and a dread of some unknown, but terrible suffering, overwhelm her. Consternation seizes the heart, so recently buoyant with the hopes and joys of a loving and trusting bride.

How will this new and dreaded experience affect her mind towards her husband and the father of her child? As a lover, he had been so gentle, so delicate, and so considerate of her slightest wish, so thoughtful of her happiness, and so unwilling to say or do anything to grieve her spirit; as a bridegroom, he had promised to love and cherish her as his own soul; and she fondly

trusted that no wrong or suffering would ever reach her through him; when, behold! in the very beginning of their united life, and before, physically or mentally, she was prepared to meet the great demand, he has imposed on her the necessity of yielding up her body and soul to the keenest suffering to which she can be subjected; and that without consulting her wishes, and contrary, it may be, to her earnest prayer. As she ponders on her situation, and the experience through which she must pass, and from which death to herself, or her child, or to both, is the only door of escape, how must she feel towards him who has placed her in this fearful condition? He has subjected her to the necessity, for weary months, of drinking the bitterest cup of life, and of passing through the valley and shadow of death, heart-sick, desponding and shrinking from the final result; and all this, not because she wished to be a mother, or he a father, nor that they might blend their bodies and souls in a new and beautiful life, to be an honor to themselves and the world, — no such motive prompted the relation in which conception originated; but solely his momentary gratification. She feels that his indulgence was had at her expense. No conscious pride and sense of matronly dignity, no high and noble aspirations, sustain her, as she reflects on her condition. Can she continue to love and respect him? He has done her the greatest wrong. He heeded not her prayers that he would control his passion, and spare her until she was ready joyfully to enter upon an office so grand in its nature, and so sublime in its bearing on the destiny of an immortal soul. To meet the responsibilities of such an office, and the physical and

mental pain and anguish necessarily pertaining to it, what woman but needs a preparation? Who is sufficient for these things? Yet the dread liabilities are upon her, without a moment's warning, and without, it may be, any interchange of thoughts and feelings with her husband and the father of her child. She knows not even that he wants a child, nor whether he will receive it with a blessing or a curse. She knows not what heart-support she will receive from him in the moment of her trial and her anguish. He has had no conversation with her on these subjects, and given her no assurance as to the natural results to her of his passional relations with her; expressed no anxiety, no expectations, no hopes, as to her liability to become a mother. He has had no further wish or anxiety, except for his own selfish gratification. He has, it may be, avoided, as indelicate and improper, all allusion to questions so vital to the life and happiness of his newly-wedded wife. All she has to rest upon is the indefinite assurance, given before God and man, that he will cherish, protect and care for her. *Why* he promised to protect and care for her, whether as a mere means of sensual gratification, or for holier and more exalted purposes, she has no assurance. Not one word, it may be, has he ever spoken to her respecting the motives that have prompted him to seek her as a wife. O, woman! woman! how dare you enter into such a relation with a man, without knowing what he expects of you?

The wife, in such a situation, cannot cherish loving and tender thoughts of her husband when absent, nor receive his caresses with rapture when present. She

bears in herself the result of the wrong he has inflicted on her. It is ever present to her thoughts and emotions. She cannot escape from it but by an outrage on herself and child; and as, in her moments of solitary suffering and anguish, she reflects on her condition, and why she must endure them, how can she regard the author of them with loving respect? The sense of the wrong done her is ever present,—can she tenderly cherish the wrong-doer, especially when he continues to demand of her a constant renewal of the relation in which her present afflictions and forebodings of future sorrows originated? She cannot; for he, by inflicting on her a maternity which her own soul cannot sanction, and from which, perhaps, she shrinks with horror, has rendered himself unworthy her love and respect.

It is in vain to urge a woman thus situated to love and honor her husband. At no command of God or man can she, as a wife, love and cherish him. Indeed, no wife can love her husband at the word of command. If she loves him at all, it is because she must, not because she is ordered to do it. Her love will flow out to him as a necessity of her being, not by the command of a third party. If he has no power to call it out and concentrate it on himself, it will not go out to him. Nothing can force it out. She is not to blame if she does not love him. She gives him all he has power to awaken and call out,—all the love he has power to take; more he has no right to ask, more she cannot give. Her love for him will correspond to his lovableness in her eyes; he will seek to render himself lovable to her, just in proportion to the value he sets on her love. Expect no love

from a woman because she is your legal wife. The legal bond can impose on her no obligation to love you; and if it did, she cannot love you, if your person and your passion become disgusting to her.

Would you, my friend, increase and perpetuate the love and respect of your wife? Then beware how you demean yourself towards her in regard to maternity, and the relation that may, at any time, result in it. To a true woman and a loving wife, maternity, and the passional expressions of her husband, must ever be ennobling, or degrading. It is for him to say which they shall be. It is for you to say whether, as the father of her child, you shall seem to your wife altogether pure, noble and attractive, or selfish, ignoble and repulsive. You must determine whether the mother of your child shall see in you a generous, tender, kingly husband, all-worthy to be the father of her child, and to rule over the empire of her heart, or a mean, merciless tyrant, having no purer or higher aim, in your relations with her, than that of animal indulgence, and whom it is impossible to respect. It is for you to say to what extent, and how long, she shall love and respect you. She must love and honor you, if you seem to her to be worthy; she cannot, if you seem otherwise. How can you thus seem, when she is made to feel that for your gratification, and against her earnest appeal to you, as a man and husband, you have imposed on her a burden which she feels unable and unwilling to bear?

Maternity, when it exists at the call of the wife, and is gratefully received, but binds her heart more tenderly and devotedly to her husband. As the father of her

child, he stands before her invested with new beauty and dignity. In receiving from him the germ of a new life, she receives that which she feels is to add new beauty and glory to her as a woman,—new grace and attraction to her as a wife. She loves and honors him, because he has crowned her with the glory of a mother. Maternity, to her, instead of being repulsive, is a diadem of beauty, a crown of rejoicing, and deep, tender, and self-forgetting are her love and reverence for him who has placed it on her brow. How noble, how august, how beautiful, is Maternity, when thus bestowed and received!

But, in proportion as it is holy and ennobling when designedly conferred and joyfully received, is it unholy and debasing, when undesigned and undesired. In proportion as a mother's heart overflows with tender gratitude and loving reverence towards the father of her child, when that child comes in answer to the call of her womanly and wifely nature, will it be filled with aversion to the father of a child which she did not want, and which she is conscious is the result of a relation sought only for a sensual purpose.

Many wives become indifferent to, or positively and forever alienated from, their husbands, from this cause. Nothing will so surely and so irrevocably destroy the love of a wife for a husband, as a disregard, on his part, of her feelings and wishes in regard to Maternity, and to the relation from which it comes. In nothing are husbands (through ignorance, I would fain think) so unmindful of the entreaties and wants of their wives, as in these respects. They often demand the surrender of their persons without any inquiry into their feelings and condi-

tions; consequently, before they are aware, the very life of God in their hearts, — that is, their love and respect for their husbands, — is crushed out of them. No wonder, when we consider what liabilities, what a sense of self-degradation, and what a shrinking of soul, are involved, to a true woman, in a surrender of her person to mere sensual passion, and to a maternity so dreaded. On the contrary, how certainly and how permanently a husband will secure the love and respect of his wife, and her perfect trust, when he so treats her as to make her feel secure that she is never to become a mother till her own nature calls for it; and when, knowing his own nature, he can assure her that he shall never subject her to the possibility of that suffering till she is able and willing to bear it!

When a woman once feels that the power of her husband is controlled by a tender love and reverence for her, and a desire to subject it to her growth and happiness, rather than to promote his own selfish ends, she rests in his bosom knowing no fear, assured that this very passion will but intensify the holy love that encircles her. When all fear of his passion is gone, her love and trust are perfected. But let the fear of that once settle on her heart, and her love is gone. Love and respect for the husband cannot exist in the heart of the wife simultaneously with a dread of his passion.

Would you, then, secure the love and trust of your wife, and become an object of her ever-growing tenderness and reverence, never impose on her a maternity which her nature does not sanction; neither subject her to the *possibility* of enduring the suffering incident to

such a situation. Assure her, by all your manifestations, and your perfect respect for the functions of her nature, that your passion shall be in subjection to her wishes, and that she will never be made to endure the trials of maternity, except at the call of her own soul. How tenderly and reverently would she, under such an assurance, regard your physical, as well as your mental and spiritual manhood!

It is not enough that you have secured, in the heart of your wife, respect for your spiritual and intellectual manhood. To maintain your self-respect in your relations with her, to perfect your growth and happiness as a husband, you must cause your *physical* nature to be tenderly cherished and reverenced by her in all the sacred intimacies of home. No matter how much she reverences your intellectual, or your social power, if she shrinks with disgust from all contact with your person, if by reason of your uncalled-for passional manifestations, you have made your physical manhood disagreeable, and all personal contact painful, how can you, in her presence, preserve a sense of manly pride and dignity as a husband? You cannot, if you respect yourself.

One distinctive characteristic of a true and noble husband is a feeling of manly pride in the physical elements of his manhood. His physical manhood, as well as his soul, is dear to the heart of his wife, because through this he can give the fullest expression to his manly power. But if such manifestations are made when the wife is not prepared to receive them, and when she repels them and dreads the consequences, his physical nature becomes associated, not with the pure joy of a longed-for

maternity, but with a deep sense of shame and degradation, with an outrage on her nature, and with the protracted suffering and anguish of an abhorred maternity. How can she respect the person of her husband? How can she cherish, and proudly care for, the purity, health and comfort of his physical nature? He has made it disgusting to her. She regards it as the deadliest enemy of her purity and peace as a wife, and as the bane of her home. She cannot look upon his person but as the source of her degradation and ruin. In its presence, she feels as in the presence of some hated reptile, from which her soul and senses shrink. How can she lovingly cherish and care for it? How can the husband respect himself, when by his own abuse of his wife and of himself, he has made his physical manhood thus contemptible to her?

How can you, my friend, avoid this? How can you secure for your person the loving care and respect of your wife? There is but one way; so manifest yourself to her, in the hours of your most endearing intimacies, that all your manly power shall be associated only with all that is generous, just and noble in you, and with purity, freedom and happiness in her. Make her feel that all which constitutes you a man, and qualifies you to be her husband and the father of her children, belongs to her, and is sacredly consecrated to the perfection and happiness of her nature. Do this, and the happiness of your home is made complete in righteousness. Your *body* will be lovingly and reverently cared for, because the wife of your bosom feels that it is the sacred symbol through which a noble, manly love is ever speaking to her, to cheer and sustain her.

Woman is ever proud, and justly so, of the manly passion of her husband, when she knows it is controlled by a love for her, whose manifestations have regard only to her elevation and happiness. The very power which, when bent only on selfish indulgence, becomes a source of more shame, degradation, disease and wretchedness, to women and to children, than all other things put together, does but ennoble her, add grace and glory to her being, and concentrate and vitalize the love that encircles her as a wife, when it is controlled by wisdom, and consecrated to her highest growth and happiness, and that of her children. It lends enchantment to her person, and gives a fascination to her smiles, her words and her caresses, which ever breathe of purity and of heaven, and make her all lovely as a wife and mother to her husband and the father of her child. Manly passion is to the conjugal love of the wife like the sun to the rosebud, that opens its petals, and causes them to give out their sweetest fragrance, and to display their most delicate tints; or like the frost, which chills and kills it ere it blossoms in its richness and beauty.

Beware, then, how you perpetrate this wrong against your wife, as you would secure her love and respect. Trifle not with the function of Maternity in her; for as this comes to her as the crowning joy and glory of her earthly existence, or otherwise, will be her estimate of you as her husband and the father of her children. See to it that she is never subjected to the possibility of becoming a mother unless she calls for it, and is ready with joy to assume the responsibilities of maternity.

But I will let woman tell her own story. She can speak on such a theme, and tell her own needs and wrongs, as no man can. The following extracts from a private letter will give you an insight into the wants and feelings of a wife and mother in regard to this subject. When woman speaks of her feelings while suffering an undesired maternity, let man reverently give heed to her words:

"My maternal experience has been varied. I have never been the recipient of a *designed* maternity, but I have that within me which gives me an idea of what its joy and blessedness might be. I have never been forced, with *entire* repugnance on my part, into the relation which resulted in conception; and yet I have suffered the keenest agonies in view of such a result.

"In the first years of my married life, I had no thought but to submit to the passion of my husband, without regard to the consequences to myself. As every true woman does, living in conjugal relations, I desired to be caressed by my husband, and to be pressed to his manly bosom. I did not suppose it was incumbent on him to control himself.

"In an unwelcome maternity, I have *sometimes* felt a deep repugnance to the passion of my husband, — a sense of deep suffering and anguish through it; but I have usually been so encircled by love as to make me forget this, or rather, shun such thoughts as sinful. But since my husband and I have come to a truer knowledge of parentage, I have come to 'love, honor and cherish' those functions which I had before only feared and obeyed. I think this is not the feeling that married women usually have towards the physical manhood of their husbands. I never heard a woman admit that her thoughts rested on the physical nature of her husband with loving respect and womanly pride; but I have heard, not unfrequently, expressions of disgust instead.

"I have known many instances in which the fathers of children, unintentionally and unwillingly conceived, became so

repulsive to the mother, during gestation, that they would be made seriously ill by coming in contact with them, in any way; though ordinarily they would be agreeable and congenial.

"I have heard many women say they would gladly strangle their children, born of undesired maternity, at birth, could they do so with safety to themselves. I believe, judging from a long and intimate acquaintance with many mothers, and from much conversation with them on this subject, that there are many children whose existence is undesigned by their fathers and undesired by their mothers. Yet among those heterogeneous and unnatural combinations called marriages, there is enough love to produce some tolerable specimens of humanity; and when there is any thing remarkable in development, there will be found physiological and psychological conditions sufficient to produce it.

"No words can express the helplessness, the sense of personal desecration, the despair, which sinks into the heart of woman when forced to submit to maternity under adverse circumstances, and when her own soul rejects it. It is no matter of wonder that abortions are purposely procured; it is to me a matter of wonder that a single child, undesignedly begotten and reluctantly conceived, is ever suffered to mature in the organism of the mother. Her whole nature repels it. How can she regard its ante-natal development but with sorrow and shrinking?

"Sensitive as woman ever is at such periods, she rarely meets with any special consideration; indeed, that very situation is too often made the occasion for increased passional indulgence on the part of the husband, or of neglect and contempt. Woman must have had, doubtless has, a very large amount of what you call the God-element in her nature, to enable her to do as well as she does in the function of Maternity, under such debasing and depressing influences.

"The strength and energy of body and mind which were required properly to develop and give birth to *one* child, have been often taxed to conceive and develop six or eight, or perhaps ten or twelve. Would it not be well to study economy in the function of Parentage, as well as in some other departments of domestic life?

"There are few, very few, wives and mothers who could not reveal a sad, dark picture in their own experience, in their relations to their husbands and their children. Maternity, and the relation in which it originates, are thrust upon them by their husbands, often without regard to their spiritual or physical conditions, and often in contempt of their earnest and urgent entreaties. No joy comes to their hearts at the conception and birth of their children, except that which arises from the consciousness that they have survived the sufferings wantonly and selfishly inflicted on them.

"There are facts enough illustrating the dire effects of an undesigned and an undesired maternity to move the whole earth to sorrow and repentance, if woman, as a wife and mother, dared give utterance to the wrongs inflicted upon her and her children. The living illustrations of woman's wrongs, inflicted on her in the holy of holies of her home, by those who had promised to 'love, cherish and protect' her, do now fill the earth. To the influences bearing on the unborn babe, in consequence of the disregard, by the husband, of the conditions and wishes of the wife in reference to maternity, and the intercourse that leads to it, must we go to learn the causes of much of the wrong and suffering of this world."

When woman's rights in regard to Maternity, and to the relation that leads to it, are truly understood and appreciated by man, then, and not before, can marriage become what it was designed to be, — a diadem of beauty, a crown of glory, to the husband and wife, and "the power of God and the wisdom of God" unto salvation to the generations of the future. Husbands! if you would secure the loving respect of your wives, you must reverently regard their protest against an undesired Maternity.

H. C. W.

LETTER III.

THE CRIME AGAINST THE CHILD.

DEAR FRIEND:

IN my last, I showed, at some length, the crime of an undesired maternity against the *mother;* how it affects her mind towards the father of her child; how it tends to destroy all love and respect for him, instead of increasing them; how it destroys her self-respect, strips her of the conscious pride and dignity of a loved and loving wife, and reduces her to the feeling and condition of a degraded, self-condemned victim of legalized sensualism. She feels polluted, degraded, outraged; and that, too, through the very function of her nature, which should have filled and thrilled her soul with conscious pride and happiness.

THE CRIME AGAINST THE CHILD. — Allow me now to direct your attention to this. Let the child of an undesigned and unwilling maternity arise before your mind. Ponder what life is, and how it is affected by birthright tendencies, — physical, intellectual and spiritual; see what a struggle it is, at best, and how difficult it is for those of the soundest bodies and healthiest souls, happily and successfully to meet the conflict. Call to mind the two great facts alluded to in a former letter, viz.: (1) That whatever comes to the child *before* birth, must come to it through the blood and organism

of the mother. (2) That, as this substance passes through her system, it must receive the impress of her physical and mental conditions. Whatever *temporarily* affects her conditions, must *permanently* affect the character and destiny of her child.

You may grievously wrong your child, and subject it to physical and mental tendencies that may deeply affect its character and happiness, during its earthly existence, by subjecting it to the liability of inheriting the unhealthy and imbecile conditions in which you and the mother may be, at the time the relation was held in which it originated. Mere sensual gratification was the sole and single motive that prompted to the relation; and even in that, your wife had no part. Her heart, it may be, not only prayed against conception, as a calamity more to be dreaded than death, but this very horror of the consequences disqualified her to participate in the relation, when it was entirely mutual, and truly and rightly prompted. Her very soul shrank from it; and she submitted to it merely to gratify you, or because she had been taught to believe it a duty incumbent on all women who enter the married relation, — a duty to which she *must* submit, or be accounted a faithless wife, — regardless of the wishes of her husband, and false to her obligations as a wife.

Duty! Talk of *duty* in such a relation! A *duty* for a woman to submit to such a relation, when her own soul not only does not sanction, but loathes it! A *duty* in a woman thus to lay her health, her self-respect, and her very womanhood, on the altar of legalized sensualism! A *duty* to become a prostitute, — a mere tool

of her husband's gratification! It is a horrid mockery! As well talk to her of her *duty* to cut her throat! No man, but a sensualist, could ever accept the surrender of a woman's person in such relation, when he knows it is made without any call in her own nature, and merely to satisfy his passion.

Your only object, it may be, in this relation, is *mere sensual indulgence.* Not one thought or care for the welfare of the child that may ensue enters your mind. Consequently, you are utterly indifferent to your physical or mental conditions, at the time. Your passion being excited, your only aim is, its gratification. Your wife may be in a state of utter prostration, physically and mentally, — severe toil, deep anxiety, sad disappointment, or some torturing care, may have exhausted her energies, and reduced her to a state of imbecility, for the time being. Despite all this, she is liable to conception. You heed not her conditions nor her wishes, but demand indulgence, regardless of her happiness or that of the child which may result therefrom. She submits, rather than contend. Maternity ensues. The mother imparts no vitality to the child in its conception. It is conceived in weakness, is developed in joyless, lifeless imbecility, or intense anguish. It is born an idiot, or without sufficient vital force to develop it into life with the ordinary energies and faculties of a man or woman.

On all hands, society is full of the victims of such a relation, — of a maternity forced on woman when, from various causes, body and soul are prostrated, and too destitute of vital energy even for the ordinary demands of daily life; how much more destitute of that fulness and

vigor of life, so necessary to the sublime and responsible act of true and healthy conception! If ever the current of life should flow with deep, concentrated, joyous energy in woman, it should be in the moment of conception, when she takes charge of the germ of a new and immortal life, and enters upon the sublime and overwhelming responsibilities of maternity. Then, indeed, she needs that all the energies of her womanhood should be in most perfect and healthful activity; then, if ever, she should be filled "with all the fulness of God."

But not only are the vital forces of your wife exhausted by other labors and anxieties, but your own energies are, from various causes, prostrated. Yet, excited by some artificial stimulant, and when the vital forces of your manhood are powerless, you demand this relation with your wife. Maternity is the result. What have you done for your child? Imparted to it, not the true life and vigor of your manhood, but its momentary imbecility. Your child, it may be, is rendered imbecile in body and idiotic in mind, solely through your fault. You exhausted your life, and then gave that exhausted, soulless life to your child. You exercised no wise and manly forethought for your child. Its well-being entered not into your designs; only your own gratification. Hence, for your child's sake, you used no exertions, by abstinence from exhausting toil or enfeebling amusements and indulgences, to exalt and perfect your physical and mental energies; but by debilitating pleasures, by sleepless nights, spent in pursuit of amusement, by dissipating games, and by exhausting indulgences in the use of narcotic and alcoholic drugs, drinks and food, you are

rendered imbecile to think, to feel, or to act. And these conditions you entail on your child as its birthright, life-long, fearful legacy, from the effects of which no power can rescue it. Can you do a greater wrong to your child? Can you commit against it a greater crime? A living death is its doom.

When should man be a *living* soul, if not in that relation in which he originates a new immortal? In that moment, so replete with human destiny, if ever, every nerve of his being should be filled and thrilled with that creative energy, that concentrated, vitalizing power which said, "Let there be light, and there was light;" and which says of creation, "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." So man, in that moment of sublime consecration of his manhood to its purest and most august function, should have a great, energetic, living soul, in a living body. He performs an act of deeper significance than that which gave existence and glory to the sun and stars — an act, from which is to arise a living soul, deathless as God in its being, and capable of reaching unimaginable heights of wisdom and love.

Your child has claims which you cannot, without injustice, ignore, — claims that reach beyond its birth, and even its conception. Its first claim is, to a *designed* existence, if it is to exist at all. Only in such an existence can it hope for a true and noble nature. Only in a relation, designed to give existence to a well-organized child, can you exercise a true, rational, and tender forethought for your offspring. The offspring of a relation held merely for the gratification of one or both parents, of a

mere chance maternity, how can it but reflect with sorrow and bitterness on the wrong of its parents? The child, as it comes to years of reflection, feels degraded in its origin. No lofty aspirations, no tender love, no animating hopes, no earnest prayer, no deep, holy longings, no vitalizing joy, no conscious pride and dignity, no God, presided over the relation in which it originated; but shrinking disgust in one parent, and brutal sensuality, and indifference to its welfare, in the other. No *Gloria in Excelsis* was sung by angels or men over its conception or birth; but sensualism, shame, anguish, and, it may be, curses deep and bitter, attended its entrance into life. What must a child, as it grows to maturity, think of an existence thus begun, and of those who could trifle with the deepest and most potent memories of the past in their offspring? Would you thus live in the hearts of your children? If not, then do them not this foul wrong. On your part, let the existence of your child be a *designed* and a *longed-for* existence. What proportion of cases of maternity result from a relation held with a view to the development of a child? Few, very few, compared to the number born. The relation was held without any wish or design to have a child; but solely with a view to sensual gratification. Consequently, the child must inherit, to some extent, the conditions the parents happen to be in at the moment. The child is robbed of a pure, true, thoughtful birthright, and is the offspring of reckless, selfish passion, rather than of a tender, anxious, thoughtful and far-seeing love. Never subject your wife to the possibility of a maternity which, on your part, is undesigned,

and, on her part, undesired. Your reward will be great and sure, in the ever-growing love and respect of your wife, in the healthful and harmonious organization and upward tendencies of your children, and in the consciousness of an ever-growing tenderness and nobleness of manhood in yourself.

The power of the mother over the child, after birth, is conceded to be great; what, then, must it be before? Who can estimate it? Reasoning from the facts I have stated, we should conclude it to be absolute, and without limit. For good or for evil, it must be great. The organic and constitutional tendencies of body and soul to health or disease, to good or evil, are settled previous to birth. The character and destiny of the future man or woman depend, essentially, on those ante-natal tendencies. These depend on the influences that are brought to bear on the child during that period. Whatever agencies bear, injuriously or otherwise, on the mother, must control the unborn child with greater and more permanent effect. What influence has an abhorred maternity on the conditions of the mother? It must be great; but great as it is, it is still greater and more abiding on the child. Its *post-natal* life will be more affected by those ante-natal influences, than by all that are brought to bear on it after its birth. The crime against the mother is great, but the crime against the child is greater, and more enduring and terrible in its consequences.

When maternity is imposed on your wife without her consent, and contrary to her appeal, how will her mind necessarily be affected towards her child? It was con-

ceived in dread, and in bitterness of spirit. Every stage of its fœtal development is watched with a feeling of settled repugnance. In every step of its ante-natal progress, the child meets only with grief and indignation in the mother. She would crush out its life, if she could. She loathed its conception; she loathed it in every stage of its ante-natal development. She cannot love and cherish it, for nought, it may be, is associated with its existence, from the beginning, but pain and sorrow. Tender, cherishing, vitalizing love does not preside over its conception and development, but grief and anguish. Instead of fixing her mind on devising ways and means for the healthful and happy organization and development of her child, before it is born, and for its post-natal comfort and support, her soul is intent on its destruction, and her thoughts devise plans to kill it.

In this, how often is she aided by others! There are those, and they are called men and women, whose profession is to devise ways to kill children before they are born. Those who do this would not hesitate to kill them after they are born; for the state of mind that would justify and instigate *ante-natal* child-murder, would justify and instigate *post-natal* child-murder. Yet, public sentiment consigns the murderer of post-natal children to the dungeon or the gallows; while the murderers of ante-natal children are often allowed to pass in society as honest and honorable men and women.

The unwelcome child is ever before the mother. She regards it as a sacrilegious intruder into the domain of her life; an invader of the holy of holies of her being. She had never called for it; it was thrust upon her, as

it were, by fraud and violence. Besides, it is the child of one whom this very outrage has caused her to dread or despise. The child is ever-present to her, not as a pledge of love, an answer to the earnest prayer of her wifely soul, as a source of living joy and ennobling hopes; but as a witness of her shame and degradation, and of the great wrong done her by its father, and by one whom she had loved and trusted, but to be betrayed. She meets her innocent, unconscious babe, at every step of its ante-natal development, with a frown, and beats it back with threats and weapons of death.

What makes that mother feel so towards her unborn babe? It is to her an *unwelcome* child. Maternity is thrust upon her before she is prepared for it. Her body shrinks from the suffering it brings to her; her soul sanctions not, but abhors, its existence. God, speaking through the body and soul of that mother, frowns on its conception, its development, and its birth. Its mother, and the God of its mother, are conspiring against the health, the happiness, the character and destiny, of the child, and of the future man or woman. How can that child, as it comes to man's or woman's estate, possibly be in harmony with God or man? Elements of strife were incorporated, by its father's agency, into its body and soul, as its birthright inheritance.

It is vain to talk to her about cheerfully and joyfully submitting to her condition, and, for her child's sake, to give it a loving, joyous welcome. She cannot, by an effort of will, nor by any course of discipline, nor from considerations of duty, compel her nature to acquiesce in such a wrong to herself and her child, and willingly and

joyfully accept a maternity thrust upon her in contempt of her dearest and most sacred rights, and in opposition to her heart's appeals for mercy. She finds no call in her nature for a child; she cannot create it by an effort of will. She is not yet prepared, mentally or physically, to meet the sufferings and responsibilities of such a relation. She can no more force herself into giving a loving reception to that unwelcome child, and to that undesired maternity, than she can force herself into a true love and respect for the father of such a child, and the doer of this wrong.

Just so far as she was accessory to its conception, and a willing partner in the relation in which it originated, she is responsible, and worthy of condemnation; but she is not to blame for not joyfully accepting a maternity thrust upon her without her consent. As well blame a woman for not loving and respecting a husband thrust upon her by parental, ecclesiastical, or civil authority, and from whom, by the instincts of her nature, she is strongly repelled. As well blame the flower for shrinking from the mildew that blights it, or the dove for shrinking from the vulture that would rend it.

War is declared between that mother and her child before it is born; a war that must be lasting as life,—a deadly conflict, to which the happiness, and, it may be, the life of the child must be victimized. No efforts of the mother of your child, after it is born, can make peace between her and her child, and obliterate from its mind all traces of the wrong done to it before it was born. And this internal, organic discord, this war, must extend to you, the father, as well as to the mother. The mother

cannot feel toward your child, thus originated, as she would had her soul rejoiced in its conception, its development and birth, with a pure, concentrated joy, which such a maternity alone can bring. After the child of an undesired maternity is born, pity for the helpless babe, rather than a rapturous welcome to a longed-for treasure, prompts her to care for it, — though facts demonstrate that a deadly hate in the mother's heart can pursue the offspring of such a maternity after it is born. Yet before it is born, but one feeling fills her soul, — a feeling of deep, settled hostility against its existence, — a feeling that it has no right to be. Its existence is unsanctioned and unconsecrated by its mother. The child struggles into life against the spirit of murder in her heart. Talk of a mother's joy over such a birth! It is blasphemy against Maternity.

Pause, my friend, and let your thoughts dwell on this subject. You would exalt and perfect human nature. You live but to people this earth with nobler types of men and women. It is the only true and great end of life. If you would labor for this sublime object, pause and consider this crime, in its bearing on the mother towards your child, and through her, on the character and destiny of that child. Enter into and comprehend, if you can, the feelings which an undesired maternity must excite in the mind of your wife towards your child. Measure, if you can, the wrong done your child by giving it being under such circumstances. See its helplessness, its innocence, and the crime you perpetrate against it. Can that child love and respect you? Can it ever forgive you? Can it ever be reconciled to you? In

vain you talk to such a child about filial gratitude and obedience. It will answer by pointing you to *paternal* wrong, inflicted on its helplessness Disobedience, ingratitude and defiance are constitutional, — bred in its bones, organized into every fibre of its being.

Consider well the power your wife holds over your child, and over its destiny as a man or woman, and ask — Shall that power be for good or evil? Shall it be exerted to give your child a beautiful, healthy, vigorous body, or a body corrupted and deformed by a painful and loathsome disease? Shall it be used to secure to your child's soul tenderness, truth, justice, generosity and nobleness, or wrath, revenge, meanness and falsehood? — to impress on its moral nature the stamp of Divinity, or the stamp of a thief, a slaveholder, a pirate, a murderer, or an assassin?

It is for you, the husband and father, to answer these questions. *Mainly*, if not entirely, you are to decide whether this great power shall be a blessing or a curse to your child. How? *Never impose on your wife a maternity, except at the call of her own nature.* When she is ready to take charge of the germ of a new life, and can joyfully welcome the responsibilities and trials of its development and birth, then, and *never till then*, impart it to her. Then will a tenderness ineffable, a love that is all-hoping, all-enduring, and all-pervading, and a joy unspeakable and full of glory, preside, like a wise and loving Providence, over the conception, ante-natal growth and education, and the birth of your child. A heart, tender, loving and vigilant as the heart of God, will watch over it for good. The perfection and happiness of your

child will be the one controlling motive of her life, and whether she eat or drink, labor or rest, or whatever she does, she will do all to the glory of that priceless and most welcome charge you have committed to her care.

How ennobling, how imposing is Maternity, when thus bestowed and thus accepted! How sublime its responsibilities, how pure its joys! How heroic its sufferings, how august its martyrdom, when thus joyfully and calmly endured! There is no heroism of earth so imposing, so sublime, and so full of glory, as that of Maternity, when joyfully accepted, and lovingly and calmly endured! No human act can be so potent and so lasting in its results. But no agony is so appalling as that of a Maternity from which the soul of woman shrinks with disgust and horror.

The character of individual and social man, and the destiny of the race, are wrapped up in Maternity. Shall a function so replete with suffering and responsibility be imposed on woman, against her prayers and her tears, merely for the momentary gratification of man? Manhood, as well as womanhood, cries out against the outrage. All that is true and noble in man says, "Forbear!" Only that which is sensual, brutal, devilish, can perpetrate this wrong against the mother and child, or approve of it.

Woman would find rest and fulness of joy in man. She rushes to him as to her tower of strength, to shelter and be sheltered to love and be loved, to bless and be blessed. A love that knows no fear, a trust that fears no danger, lay her in his bosom, and prompt to and consecrate the entire surrender of her soul and body to his manly keeping. Will you call that man true, noble or honorable,

who can take advantage of a love so pure and a trust so boundless, to impose on her a suffering and anguish, and a responsibility, for which she is not prepared, and from which her soul shrinks; thus placing her in an unnatural position in regard to her child, and thus outraging his own offspring, by giving it an existence loathed even by the mother who gave it birth? What shall be said of the man who will commit a deed so atrocious? A husband he is not; he ignores the first principles of a true and noble manhood. He is but a selfish, disgusting sensualist. A father he is not, deserving tender and loving reverence from his wife, but an ANIMAL, whose brutal gratification is the first law of life, and one whom neither mother nor child can respect.

But I will reserve further remarks on this subject until my next letter.

Thine, H. C. W.

LETTER IV.

THE CRIME AGAINST THE CHILD, AS AFFECTING ITS ANTE-NATAL EDUCATION.

DEAR FRIEND:

In the preceding letter, I have shown how, and to what extent, a maternity, undesigned by the father and undesired by the mother, affects the organization, character and destiny, of the child. I wish to pursue the question still further.

Life is before you,—a long and happy one, I trust. May it increase in goodness and usefulness as it does in years! Your power is great, and will be greater. Already the minds of thousands are deeply and permanently influenced by you. I know that MAN, and not institutions or dogmas, is the object of your devotion; that the all-controlling, ever-present sentiment of your life is, *the supremacy of man over his incidents.* I know that you reverence man, not his incidents. You feel, and in your life seek to embody the truth, that *man is eternal*, his institutions transient and ever-changing. Man is the great *fact;* his religious, social, governmental, ecclesiastical, literary, monetary and commercial surroundings are merely passing incidents of his existence, to be changed or cast away as suits his growth and convenience. Man is the substance, all else the shadow. The appendages will be laid aside, but man will live, death-

less as God. You would never sacrifice man to his incidents; the head to the hat, or the body to the coat, — the enduring substance to the passing shadow.

You see and worship God in man, not in his incidents. In those relations which bear most directly and powerfully on the development, purity and nobility of your manhood, and on your character and destiny, you recognize the most perfect manifestation of the Divine presence and power. In them, the great thinking intellect and pulsating heart of the universe, — the God-element of Nature, — speak to you as in nothing else.

Of all your relations, which is most potent to develop your manhood, to unfold to yourself, and to all, the hidden wealth and depths of your being; to vitalize and call into manly activity all the powers of your physical and intellectual nature? Your soul promptly answers, "That of the HUSBAND and the FATHER." No man who has lived in those relations can doubt the truth of your answer. God speaks to you through your wife and child, as through no other being of the past or present. Through those loved ones, He, as it were, renders himself visible, audible, tangible to you, and you meet him and talk with him face to face. They are his natural prophets and messiahs to you — the media through which the God-element of the universe flows into you, quickening and vitalizing, and arousing to energetic activity, all the powers of your manhood. Through them, an influence is thrown upon and around you, which silently, but surely, defines and shapes your plans of life, and quickens, expands, and ennobles your affections. In them, a PRESENCE is ever before you, whose

beauty and brightness illuminate your pathway, and which is ever beckoning you onward and upward, and breathing into your soul a desire and a daring to reach the sublimest heights of purity and nobleness. In truth, you may say, in your wife and child are the hidings of God's power, to form your character and shape your destiny.

What, then, so important to you, as a true knowledge and just appreciation of your relations as a husband and father? As a husband and father, you can do more to elevate and perfect the human type, and to save yourself, than you can in any other relation: political, ecclesiastical, commercial and social relations are insignificant, in comparison. I know you live but to glorify the nature you bear, and to enjoy that glorified nature forever. Such being with you the chief end of existence, I ask you to weigh, with candor and earnestness, the following observations on THE ANTE-NATAL EDUCATION AND HISTORY OF MAN. I have long been accustomed to consider human beings in connection with three states, and to think, speak and write on the comparative influence of these states on their character and destiny:

1. The state preceding birth, which I am accustomed to call the *Ante-Natal* state.

2. The state between birth and death, or the embodied state.

3. The state after death, or the disembodied state. The two last, the *Post-Natal* spheres or states.

Religion, government, education, commerce, agricul ture, mechanics, literature, the press, the convention, —

these, hitherto, have confined attention, almost exclusively, to human life in its post-natal spheres, embodied or disembodied. They take up human beings, *after* they are born, and seek to do for them what they may to promote their welfare; and much of the doing consists in trying to undo what had been done for them in the ante-natal state. To a great extent, in promoting the education of children, this state has been ignored, as having no connection with the character and destiny in the post-natal spheres.

Come, my friend, go with me back to that which Church and State have overlooked, and view human beings between conception and birth. The period is brief; but is it not important? Is it powerless? Are no influences exerted and no events transpiring there, of sufficient moment to render them worthy attention, in considering the history and estimating the character of the individual man or woman, or of states and nations?

Many years since, the conviction was settled in my mind, that that period, though so brief, and hidden from observation in the very holy of holies of the temple of life, has more to do in giving tone to our feelings, intensity, activity and character to our passions and appetites, direction to our thoughts and plans, and in moulding our character and shaping our destiny, in the post-natal spheres of our being, than all that is brought to bear on us after we are born. OUR ANTE-NATAL HISTORY IS THE KEY TO OUR POST-NATAL LIFE. There is not a man or woman who is not a living witness to the truth of this assertion.

I think it cannot be doubted, that much of the physical disease and suffering, and much of the idiocy, insanity, and mental and moral obliquity of our post-natal, embodied state, is the result of our ante-natal organization. Much, indeed, is done for us before the germs of our being leave the *paternal* organism. They must, to a greater or less extent, receive the impress of the father's conditions of body and soul; and he will do a service to the world who shall show to fathers their responsibilities in this matter. But *Maternity* is the subject under consideration; and in discussing this, my concern with the germ is after the mother takes charge of it. *The period between conception and birth* is that to which I would call your attention.

From a long and critical observation of facts, and a persevering effort to trace the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual conditions and phenomena of the individual and social lives of children and adults, in the many thousands of families in which, for a longer or shorter time, I have been an inmate, I long ago came to the conclusion, that to their ANTE-NATAL EDUCATION, men and women are more beholden for their healthful or diseased physical conditions, sufferings or enjoyments, and for their mental and spiritual tendencies, their peculiarities of temper and disposition, their aptitudes to truth or falsehood, to justice or injustice, to love or hate, to peace or war, to temperance or drunkenness, to forgiveness or revenge, to sexual purity or impurity, to happiness or misery, than to all the influences that are brought to bear on them, after they are born, to whatever age they may attain. These tendencies, whether

of body or soul, are mainly, if not entirely, organized as fixed facts of existence in the individual man or woman, in their ante-natal state. There is not a human being, there never was one, and never will be, whose whole life is not essentially, constantly, and in its minutest details, instigated and directed, more or less, by gestational influences.

If this be so, where are we to look for the forming and controlling causes of human character and destiny, and of physical, mental, and spiritual idiosyncrasies? Where shall we go to find the true foundations of biography and history, and the controlling elements of all religions and governments? Where go to find the mainsprings of war, slavery, drunkenness, polygamy, licentiousness, and of all the sufferings, anguish and woes of marriage and domestic life, that arise from the abuse of the sexual element? Where go to find the cause of a repulsive and loathed maternity, and of the horrors to which it leads? Where, indeed, but to the germs of diseases, and the aptitudes to good or evil, that were organized into the bodies and souls of men and women, as fixed facts and elements of life, by influences that were brought to bear upon them, through the maternal organism, between the periods of conception and birth?

This ante-natal education makes the man and woman, the Religion and Government, the Church and State, the social, educational, and commercial customs and institutions; and whoever attempts to write the biography of an individual, or the history of a Church or State, without reference to that education, and its controlling

power over human character and destiny, fails to present the whole truth. He fails to trace effects to their causes, and must necessarily give a partial or perverted view of the phenomena of life.

"*Maxima debetur pueris reverentia.*" [The greatest reverence is due to childhood.] Thus sang the Roman poet Juvenal, two thousand years ago. Reverence childhood! If this be so important after the child is born, how much more reverence is due to *ante-natal* childhood? Be thy hands clean, thy robes spotless, thy looks, thy tones, thy mien, tender, sweet, loving, reverential, and thy heart filled and thrilled with pure worship, as thou enterest the temple of man's ante-natal life! With these feelings, enter with me the very holy of holies of that temple, over which God spreads his wings of tenderest love and highest wisdom, as protecting cherubims and seraphims. Behold, there, the unconscious future man or woman, in a process of gestational organization and development, subjected to influences over which he or she has no control, and receiving a physical, intellectual, social and spiritual education that is to decide the character, for good or evil, for happiness or misery, in the great future that is opening before them.

See what a future is wrapped up in that unconscious embryo man or woman! It may be that the fates of states and empires are being inscribed, by some unseen power, on that body and soul. Already that unformed child may hold in its grasp the destinies of millions and of ages. But who is the educator? Who guides the pen that is inscribing peace or war, liberty or slavery

life or death, to those millions and those ages, and the scroll of destiny to states and kingdoms, to religions and governments, on the soul of that unborn babe? THE MOTHER. Through her must come every element essential to constitute the body and soul of that child; and, as it passes through her system, it must receive the stamp of her physical, social and spiritual conditions.

Keep in mind the great fact, that the mental states of the mother, during gestation, must necessarily and permanently affect every particle of that substance which goes to make the organization and growth of her child, for good or evil. Whatever injuriously affects her thoughts and feelings, must permanently affect the physical, social, intellectual and moral aptitudes of her child.

Suppose that you have, undesignedly and without her consent, imposed maternity on your wife. On discovering the fact, it becomes most repulsive to her nature. She is not prepared to bear the cross and endure the crucifixion. Instantly, her soul is filled with murderous intent. She resolves to nip and crush the opening bud of life, — to procure abortion, — that is, to commit the deed of ante-natal child-murder. She does not feel that it is *her* child. She may regard it as *yours*, but she cannot acknowledge it as her own; and though it must receive its gestational development in her organism, she cannot tenderly and lovingly cherish and guard it, as bone of her bone, flesh of her flesh, and soul of her soul. It is so *in fact*, but not in her *feelings*. She asked not for it; her soul repels it as an intruder, thrust upon her without her consent, and in contempt, it may be, of her

earnest remonstrance, — for thus it often is. The child, she feels, has no right to an existence at her expense, and who shall say it has? An uninvited and hated intruder is exhausting her vital energies, and robbing her of that which no earthly treasures can ever restore or recompense. Through her physical suffering and mental anguish, an unbidden and loathed guest is feeding and thriving on her heart's blood. Desperation, and the bitterness of death, are in her heart. MURDER fills her soul towards your unconscious and innocent babe.

Who is responsible? On whom rests the guilt? It is your work. You forced that heavy burden upon her, and compelled her to bear it. You thrust your child, as an intruder, into the sacred domain of her life, to derive existence through her organism and at her expense, knowing that she was not prepared to welcome it, and to bend the forces of her nature to its growth and support; and contrary, it may be, to her earnest entreaties that she might be spared this pain and anguish till she was ready joyfully to welcome them. But you heeded not her prayer; you assumed the right to decide for her when she was prepared to endure these trials, and under what circumstances she should be a mother. You must have your stated gratification; you have abused your manhood and your wife, till this indulgence, as you think, has become as essential a want of your life as your daily food, — as the drunkard feels that alcohol is as essential as air to his existence and happiness; and so you impose on her a maternity which her soul abhors. You horribly tax her vital energies, "*without her consent.*" Murder is in her heart towards the uninvited and hated

intruder you have introduced into the sanctuary of her life.

That mother, whose heart is thus filled with murder towards your child, is its educator! Into her hands you committed its destiny; and in the very act of so doing, you aroused in her heart the spirit of murder against the unconscious, innocent being whom she is to nourish into life. In the very act of committing the germ of the new immortal to her, you destroyed in her the power to be its loving, nursing mother. You knew that she would not and could not love and reverence it, and do justice to it; that she would hate it, and kill it if she could. All this you knew, yet you forced the charge upon her!

Suppose your child were born; would you commit its education and destiny to one, who, as you knew, would cherish murder in her heart towards it, who would "get rid of it" (as the phrase is), i. e., kill it, if she could without injury to herself,—yes, and kill it although at the risk of death to herself, such being her dread and her loathing of the charge? You would, yourself, be the murderer, if you did. Should you commit the *post-natal* education and happiness of your child to such a woman, knowing her utter repugnance to the charge, and her determination to "get rid of it" if she could,—would you not be responsible for the consequences, whether she killed it, or whether she preserved it alive, only to infuse into it a deadly wrath and revenge towards you, and towards all of human kind? You would. You knew she loathed its existence when you thrust it upon her, and that she would destroy the young life if

she could; and that, if it lived to grow up under the training of such a spirit, it must be at war, in heart and life, with all its surroundings, must be unloved and unloving, hated and hating, and an object of anxiety and dread to all with whom it might chance to be associated.

What else do you do, when you impose on your wife a maternity unasked and abhorred? You commit the development and education of your child, during the most important and susceptible period of its existence, to one who assures you she is not prepared for the charge, who entreats you to spare her, and who loathes the very thought of its existence. Every element of her womanly nature, for the time being, recoils from its presence in her system. She pleads that you would spare her this burden, at this time, and until her nature calls for it, and is prepared joyfully to meet the martyrdom maternity must bring to her. Heedless of her prayers, and, it may be, of threats of death to your child, you demand the surrender of her person to your passion. Maternity ensues. Murder enters her heart towards your child, at the same time. She tries to "get rid of it,"—to murder it. She succeeds. The young life you had committed to her care is nipped in the bud, as you were assured it would be before you resigned it to her keeping. Where rests the responsibility? On you, primarily and mainly. You murdered your own child, not, indeed, with your own hands,—you drove another to do the desperate deed, and that other, your wife, who came to you, with a loving and trusting heart, to save and to be saved; and you, to gratify your selfish passion, drove her to the commission

of the crime of ante-natal child-murder, — a crime that must forever weigh upon her soul like a mountain of guilt and shame; a deed, after the doing of which, no true woman can ever, in this life, stand proud and stainless, in conscious innocence and dignity, before the tribunal of her womanhood. She has done a deed for which great Nature can find no excuse but ignorance; but which, even when done in ignorance, she regards as a violation of her just laws, and punishes as such, with appropriate penalties, — the loss of self-respect, and the consciousness of degradation.

Yet all this suffering, anguish, crime and conscious degradation, you, the husband, have forced upon her, solely for the momentary, and, under the circumstances, most unnatural, gratification of your sensual passion, — a passion which, when controlled by manly love and wisdom, and held in abeyance to the health, purity, and happiness of your wife and children, would bring only honor to their hearts and to your home, but which, when thus indulged without regard to the wishes and conditions of your wife, and merely for your personal pleasure, spreads crime, pollution, misery and death, all around.

How dare you, how dare any husband, commit the destiny of his child into the hands of one, who, as he knows, thus loathes the thought of its existence? How can you subject your child to the possibility of such a gestational organization and development: such an ante-natal education; or force upon your wife the suffering and anguish of a loathed and hated maternity, or the necessity of doing a deed from which the soul of every

noble woman must shrink with sickening horror? You could not do this wrong to your wife and child, till your manhood was sunk in the mire of disgusting sensualism.

A loathed and hated maternity! A woman, a mother, shrinking with disgust and horror from the thought of giving existence to her child! A mother's heart throbbing with murder toward the child over whose development and education it is presiding! Do you say this is strong language?—too strong? That it cannot be? Do you say a mother does not, cannot, hate and loathe her unborn babe? Why, then, does she kill it? Her spirit is known by its fruit. Is not her whole soul bent on its destruction, even at the risk of her own health and life?

"Abortion!" "Get rid of it!" Gentle terms, these; respectable, no doubt, as some count gentle and respectable; but used to cover a most foul, unnatural deed *Ante-natal child-murder* alone can truly express the nature of the act. If no murderous hate is in the mother's heart, why does she kill the child? If you saw a mother seeking to kill her child after it was born, knowing that she did it because its existence was hateful to her, and because she did not wish to bear the burden of its nursing and training, would you not conclude that her heart was filled with murder towards it? So when a woman is willing to imperil her own life, to outrage every womanly element of her being, and forfeit the conscious innocence and respect of her own soul, to inflict death upon her unborn child, you may be sure that a deep and terrible loathing and hatred are in her heart

towards the new and expanding life which the husband, for mere sensual gratification, has thrust upon her.

What means the wide-spreading disposition among men and women to procure and to palliate the murder of children before they are born? One thing is surely indicated by it, namely, the *increasing* sensualism of men, and their determination to gratify it without regard to consequences to their wives and children. It is a swift witness against their purity and nobleness, and shows an utter recklessness in the pursuit of sensual pleasure. It also opens the frightful depths to which woman can fall and has fallen. How many women of New England have on their souls, at this hour, the ineffaceable stain of ante-natal child-murder? How many bear in their physical organism the incurable results of this crime? How many families are now suffering from it? Go ask the men and women doctors, who, for gold, perpetrate this crime, and who shamelessly advertise their infamy. Tens of thousands of wives and mothers are to be seen, all over the country, at once the perpetrators and victims of this cruel and disgusting act; all, all to administer to the sensualism of men, who are called *husbands!* Husbands! the guilt is mainly yours; and the damnation is just. Beneath your foul wrong to their nature, your wives sink, and you must go down with them.

Ponder the following extract from a private letter, containing the experience of a wife and mother, in regard to enforced and hated maternity and ante-natal child-murder. The letter is of recent date; the writer and her family are known to me personally:

"Before we married, I informed him [the husband] of my dread of having children. I told him I was not yet prepared to meet the sufferings and responsibilities of maternity. He entered into an arrangement to prevent it, for a specified time. This agreement was disregarded. After the legal form was over, and he felt that he could now indulge his passion without loss of reputation, and under legal and religious sanctions, he insisted on the surrender of my person to his will. He violated his promise at the beginning of our united life. That fatal bridal night! it has left a cloud on my soul and on my home, that can never pass away on earth. I can never forget it. It sealed the doom of our union, as it does of thousands.

"He was in feeble health; so was I; and both of us mentally depressed. But the sickly germ was implanted, and conception took place. We were poor and destitute, having made no preparations for a home for ourselves and child. I was a stricken woman. In September, 1838, we came to ———, and settled in a new country. In the March following, my child, developed under a heart throbbing with dread and anguish at the thought of its existence, was born. After three months' struggle, I became reconciled to my, at first, unwelcome child. But the impress of my impatience and hostility to its existence, previous to its birth, was on my child, never to be effaced; and to this hour, that child is the victim of an undesired maternity.

"In one year, I found I was again about to be a mother. I was in a state of frightful despair. My first-born was sickly and very troublesome (how could it be otherwise?), needing constant care and nursing. My husband chopped wood for our support. Of the injustice of bringing children into the world to such poverty and misery, I was then as sensible as now. I was in despair. I felt that death would be preferable to maternity under such circumstances. A desire and determination to get rid of my child entered into my heart. I consulted a lady friend, and by her persuasion and assistance, killed it. Within less than a year, maternity was again imposed upon me, with no better prospect for doing justice to my child. It was a most painful conviction to me; I felt that I could not have another

child at that time. All seemed dark as death. I had begged and prayed to be spared this trial again, till I was prepared to accept it joyfully; but my husband insisted on his gratification, without regard to my wishes and conditions.

"I consulted a physician, and told him of my unhappy state of mind, and my aversion to having another child, for the present. He was ready with his logic, his medicines and instruments, and told me how to destroy it. After experimenting on myself three months, I was successful. I killed my child about five months after conception.

"A few months after this, maternity was again forced upon me, to my grief and anguish. I determined, again, on the child's destruction; but my courage failed as I came to the practical deed. My health and life were in jeopardy; for my living child's sake, I wished to live. I made up my mind to do the best I could for my unborn babe, whose existence seemed so unnatural and repulsive. I knew its young life would be deeply and lastingly affected by my mental and physical conditions. I became, in a measure, reconciled to my dark fate, and was as resigned and happy as I could be under the circumstances. I had just such a child as I had every reason to expect. I could do no justice to it. How could I?

"Soon after the birth of my child, my husband insisted on his accustomed indulgence. Without any wish of my own, maternity was again forced upon me. I dared not attempt to get rid of the child, abortion seemed so cruel, so inhuman, unnatural, and repulsive. I resolved again, for my child's sake, to do the best I could for it. Though I could not joyfully welcome, I resolved quietly to endure, its existence.

"After the birth of this child, I felt that I could have no more to share our poverty and to suffer the wrongs and trials of an unwelcome existence. I felt that I had rather die at once, and thus end my life and my power to be a mother together. My husband cast the entire care of the family on me. I had scarcely one hour to devote to my children. My husband still insisted on his gratification. I was the veriest slave alive. Life

had lost its charms. The grave seemed my only refuge, and Death my only friend.

"In this state, known as it was to my husband, he thrust maternity upon me twice. I employed a doctor to kill my child, and in the destruction of it, in what should have been the vigor of my life, ended my power to be a mother. I was shorn of the brightest jewel of my Womanhood. I suffered, as woman alone can suffer, not only in body, but in bitter remorse and anguish of soul.

"All this I passed through, under the terrible, withering consciousness, that it was all done and suffered solely that the passion of my husband might have a momentary indulgence. Yet such had been my false religious and social education, that, in submitting my person to his passion, I did it with the honest conviction that, in marriage, my body became the property of my husband. He said so; all women to whom I applied for counsel, said it was my duty to submit, that husbands expected it, had a right to it, and must have this indulgence, whenever they were excited, or suffer; and that in this way alone could wives retain the love of their husbands. I had no alternative but silent, suffering submission to his passion, and then procure abortion, or leave him, and thus resign my children to the tender mercies of one with whom I could not live myself. Abortion was most repulsive to every feeling of my nature. It seemed degrading, and, at times, rendered me an object of loathing to myself.

"When my first-born was three months old, I had a desperate struggle for my personal liberty. My husband insisted on his right to subject my person to his passion, before my babe was two months old. I saw his conduct then in all its degrading and loathsome injustice. I pleaded, with tears and anguish, for my own and my child's sake, to be spared; and had it not been for my helpless child, I should then have ended the struggle by bolting my legal bonds. For its sake, I submitted to that outrage, and to my own conscious degradation. For its sake, I concluded to take my chance in the world with other wives and mothers, who, as they assured me, and as I then knew, were,

all around me, subjected to like outrages, and driven to the degrading practice of abortion.

"But, even then, I saw and argued the justice of my personal rights in regard to Maternity, and the relation that leads to it, as strongly as you do now. I saw it all as clearly as you do. I was then, amid all the degrading influences that crushed me, true and just in my womanly intuitions. I insisted on my right to say when and under what circumstances I would accept of him the office of Maternity, and become the mother of his child. I insisted that it was for me to say when and how often I should subject myself to the liability of becoming a mother. But he became angry with me; claimed ownership over me; insisted that I, as a wife, was to submit to my husband, '*in all things;*' threatened to leave me and my children, and declared I was not fit to be a wife. Fearing some fatal consequence to my child or to myself, being alone, destitute, and far from helpful friends, in the far West, and fearing that my little one would be left to want, I stifled all expressions of my honest convictions, and ever after kept my aversion and painful struggles in my own bosom.

"In every respect, so far as passional relations between myself and husband are concerned, I have ever felt myself to be a miserable and abject woman. I now see and feel it most deeply and painfully. If I was with a child in my arms, I was in constant dread of all personal contact with my husband, lest I should have a new maternity thrust upon me, and be obliged to wean one child before its time, to give place to another. In my misery, I have often cried out, 'O God! is there no way out of this loathsome bondage?'

"It was not want of kindly feelings towards my husband that induced this state of mind, for I could and did endure every privation and want without an unkind feeling or word, and even cheerfully, for his sake. But every feeling of my soul did then, does now, and ever must, protest against the cruel and loathsome injustice of husbands towards their wives, manifested in imposing on them a maternity uncalled for by their own nature and

most repulsive to it, and whose sufferings and responsibilities they are unprepared and unwilling to meet.

"Yours,

"_____ _____."

"Strong language!"—"Too strong and sweeping epithets!" Can you, as a man, a husband and a father, read the above extract, and feel or say that my language is too strong? The above is the experience of a living wife and mother, nearly *verbatim* as written by herself. It is a simple, unvarnished, affecting story, but bearing on its face the stamp of truth, and the evidence of a sense of conscious injustice inflicted by the husband, and of a degradation self-inflicted, solely to escape what seemed to her a greater evil. Can such "loathsome injustice," on the part of husbands and fathers, towards their wives and unborn children, be reprobated in too strong terms?

Husbands! it is your licentiousness that drives your wives to a deed so abhorrent to their every wifely, womanly and maternal instinct; a deed which ruins the health of their bodies, prostitutes their souls, and makes marriage, maternity, and womanhood itself, degrading and loathsome. No terms can sufficiently characterize the cruelty, meanness, and disgusting selfishness and injustice of your conduct, when you impose on them a maternity so detested as to drive them to the desperation of killing their unborn children, and often themselves.

Is it a wonder that wives seek to justify themselves in resorting to ante-natal child-murder? I do not wonder at it. The wonder is, that a woman should live one hour, as a wife, with one who imposes on her a repulsive maternity, thus doing to her, and her child, the greatest

possible wrong; or who can, for one moment, subject her to the liability of becoming a mother, when her own nature repels the office. One such maternity, imposed after the husband knows that his wife shrinks from it, should lead every woman to "bolt the legal bond" that binds her to such a man. If she does not, but submits to the injustice, she wrongs her child, her husband, and her own soul. The same plea may be offered in extenuation of ante-natal child-murder, under circumstances of enforced, repulsive maternity, that is offered in justification of Margaret Garner, the fugitive-slave mother, who cut the throat of one child and threw another into the river, to save them from the savage clutch of licensed kidnappers.

Ante-natal child-murder, — a mother killing her unborn babe to save it from a worse doom! It is a fearful alternative; one whose results to the soul of the mother are no less deadly than to the forming body of her child. It prostitutes, crucifies, murders, whatever is pure, lovely, wifely, motherly and womanly in her soul; and, for the time being, as it were, blots from it the superscription and image of God. She murders her unborn babe, and often herself, to save herself and child from what she considers a more loathsome and repulsive doom. Who can harshly and coarsely condemn her? She feels that death to herself and babe, at her own hands, is far preferable, and less criminal, than a loathed maternity, and the birth of an unwelcome and hated child. To save herself and child from slavery, the slave mother cuts its throat, and then her own. The wife, to save herself and child from what she regards as

a no less horrible doom, imposed by the husband, destroys her unborn child, and brings death to her own soul, if not to her body.

O man! where is thy manhood, that thou canst inflict this wrong on the woman, who, with an all-trusting love, lays herself in thy bosom, reposing fearless confidence in thy manly love and power to shelter her from harm? Husband! where is thy love, thy justice, thy tenderness, thy manliness, thy conscience, thy God, that thou canst impose these sufferings and responsibilities on thy wife, despite her tears and entreaties to be spared till she is ready joyfully to welcome them for thy sake and her own? Fathers! where is your reverence for your offspring, your tender regard for the claims of your unborn children, and your respect for all that qualifies you to be fathers and your wives mothers, that you beget children to ante-natal murder, or to the, if possible, more terrible doom of an existence undesired, and abhorrent to the mothers that bore them?

Husbands! listen to the voice of God, speaking to you through your wives, and, in the name of those most dear to your hearts, and most essential to the happiness and glory of your life and your homes, give heed to their protests against an undesigned and repulsive maternity!

H. C. W.

LETTER V.

THE WIFE'S APPEAL — THE HUSBAND'S RESPONSE.

DEAR FRIEND:

In the three preceding letters, I have endeavored to present to you the crime of an undesigned and undesired Maternity, especially in its bearing on the mother and the child. I have shown how it wrongs the mother by crushing out of her heart her love and respect for her husband, and converting them into a settled feeling of bitterness and contempt; and also by filling her with feelings of murderous hostility towards her child, and driving her to deeds which her soul abhors, — thus destroying her self-respect, and making her to seem like a loathsome and degraded object in her own estimation. I have shown, also, how it wrongs the child, by depriving it of a mother's loving sympathy, by forcing it into an existence that is detested by father and mother, by stamping on it, before birth, disease and crime, and tendencies to all that is evil, and thus subjecting it to the detestation of its fellow-beings, in its future manhood or womanhood. The father perpetrates the deepest crime against the child, by committing its ante-natal education to the hands of one to whom its very existence is her abhorrence and loathing. What greater crime could a husband and father commit against his wife and child? None; no, *none!*

In this letter, I will give you the experience of a husband and wife, as given by themselves, and by a mutual friend, who is also a wife and a mother. I extract from their letters with few omissions. See, in the experience of this wife and mother, the deep, unutterable anguish, and the deeper woe of conscious degradation, to which woman, in her mistaken notions of conjugal duty, her fear of losing a husband's love and confidence, and her horror of an undesired maternity, will subject herself. Read over her experience, as detailed by her friend and herself, and then say if any crime man can commit, can surpass that which husbands and fathers often do to their wives and children, merely for the momentary gratification of their sensual passions:

"Some fifteen years ago, a man of culture, and engaged in public life, was united in marriage with an intimate friend of mine. With pride and confidence, he selected her from a large and admiring circle of friends, as one embodying his ideal of womanly excellence. My friend was thought a fortunate girl (only seventeen), and many thought him quite as fortunate. They were much in society, and she began to enjoy life intensely.

"She was too much a woman not to desire offspring some time, but she felt unprepared to have maternity forced upon her youth and inexperience. It came at a time when her husband's calling led him much from home, to mix in the society she so much enjoyed, and which she felt was contributing to make her what she so much desired to be, — her husband's fitting and equal companion. It was not without a severe struggle she resigned these advantages and checked her aspirations. However, she submitted, though she keenly felt the sacrifice.

"Though overwhelmed with the greatness of her responsibilities, and an undefined dread of physical suffering, she was determined not to appear weak, but bravely to meet and bear the burden imposed upon her. Her husband was absent when the trial hour came; but when he returned, he took his babe and wife to his bosom with pride and joy, though its gestational development had, apparently, scarcely given him an anxious thought.

"My friend's future looked bright. She did not see or understand the fact, that she was to continue to develop the germs of human beings into life, with little sustaining help from the father, whose caresses generally ended in exhausting her vital powers by passional indulgence. She did not complain, but rather rejoiced, as she saw her other powers of attraction to her husband depart one by one, that she was so organized as to be able to meet what she knew he considered an essential want of his nature.

"Eleven years passed, at which time she gave birth to her sixth child. She was a devoted mother, of a joyous spirit, and possessed of wonderful elasticity. But woman cannot be entirely happy in maternity alone, without the presence and sustaining power of her husband. If she is a true wife, she desires to be more to her husband than merely the mother of his children.

"Her husband made for her a beautiful material home, and seemed happy when with her; but he was much away; he sought other pleasures, social and intellectual, in which she could not participate; — she must stay at home, alone, with her children. Little did he know the trials of patience and strength in his wife, in being compelled to bear the responsibility of the health and training of her little ones alone. The world called her a happy wife, and she felt that she ought to be so; but a dark cloud was coming over her once joyous spirit. She began to realize the fact, so fatal to a wife's happiness, that her husband did not feel her to be his equal, and a fitting companion to meet his social and intellectual necessities. When he brought home a friend, she listened to conversations and discussions in which she could

not participate. She felt keenly the growing distance between them, and she knew too well how it had come about.

"She quietly made up her mind to have no more children. How did she propose to bring it about? Not by asking her husband to deny himself his accustomed indulgence; no, that, she thought, would be to cut herself off from her strongest hold on his affection and confidence, and to sever the last link of the chain that bound them together. She did not expect that any precaution would enable her to escape conception. She brought herself to do what was most repugnant to her nature, and which, as she felt, would destroy her self-respect, and make her, in her own estimation, a degraded woman, namely, TO PROCURE ABORTION.

"The first shock given to her constitution by this abuse of her nature was comparatively light. But once did not suffice. As a longer interval passed without a new-born babe than ever before, she had begun to take her place by her husband's side in society, earnestly praying that she might be spared maternity evermore. Her husband delighted to have her with him. He felt that he had a right, by law and the customs of society, to his gratification; he persevered in demanding it, and she continued to yield. Several times in four years did she nip the young flower of fœtal life in the bud, and each time told more and more terribly on her constitution, until the power of conception was nearly destroyed, at little more than thirty-five years of age. She was shorn of her Womanhood, and became a sickly, broken-down wife and mother, in the very spring-time, as it were, of her life, being driven frequently to perpetrate a degrading outrage upon herself, or endure a maternity abhorrent to her soul;—and all to gratify the sensual passion of her husband, thinking thereby to secure his affection and respect. How fatally mistaken! By yielding, she strengthened his *passion*, but not his love.

"Reflecting on her sad experience, in the light of your book on 'Marriage and Parentage,' which I had placed in her hands, she saw clearly where the wrong had been, but for a long time felt powerless to destroy what she regarded as her last hold on her husband. He was absent, and I prevailed on her to write

and lay the matter frankly and plainly before him, and send him your book. She was then prostrated in body and soul by the last outrage upon her womanly and maternal nature. She wrote, and, hoping that you may do good with these letters, the husband and wife have granted me the privilege of copying portions of them for you. Here is a part of hers to him:

"'MY DEAR HUSBAND:

"'I feel like lying down and weeping that I have become unworthy, intellectually and spiritually, of mating with you; but *love* is the foundation of true marriage, is it not? and I feel strong in my love-nature. It is high, and deep, and rich, and who shall say, if rightly cultivated, what flowers of intellect and spirituality might not blossom out from its soil?

"'My husband! forgive me if I say, that I deeply and sadly feel that my Womanhood has been robbed of its most precious charm, for *your* sake, through a weak indulgence and subjection to that in you which is lower than the spiritual. My body has been painfully desecrated, perhaps not more by your act than mine. You suffer the loss of that refining and ennobling influence which only an *undefiled* woman can impart to man.

"'In view of our past, words cannot express my remorse and self-condemnation; but believe me, the bitterest suffering is caused to me by the knowledge that through this sin and misery, I am rendered incapable of becoming to you a tithe of what I desire to be. How can you do otherwise than shrink from the wreck I am fast becoming? And though I may feel, in my moments of anguish and remorse, that *you* are as much the cause of my mental and physical wreck and imbecility as I am, God grant I may not unjustly murmur or accuse you!

"'It is said, "Men never love complaining women." Alas! if they treated their wives with half the respect and tender consideration they do other women, there would be less ground for complaint. I am convinced, *that in proportion as woman yields to the demands of animal passion in her husband, in that same ratio he loses his love and respect for her.* By bitter and humiliating experience, this conviction is forced upon me.

"'My husband! I love you. The power lies in you to bless and save me; the power lies in me to bless and save you; but have we not cursed each other instead? I cry unto you for life,—will you give me death? I would make my Womanhood a crown of glory to your life, your Manhood to mine. Shall we allow the very life-essence of our being to be exhausted in sensual indulgence, till we lose the power to feel and appreciate a pure spiritual love? My heart is reaching out to you for life, at the same time that my body is suffering untold agonies from the outrages perpetrated on my nature to escape the anguish and horror of an unwelcome maternity; outrages which have polluted and humbled my soul, and nearly destroyed my body—all for your sake; that I might retain your love and respect.

"'I would rather lay down my life now, than live without your love. Can we not love purely and nobly, without prostituting that love in mere sensual indulgence? My soul would arise and go to you as an inspiration from God; but I am suffering, and a realization of my present condition, my physical diseases, and mental anguish, and the knowledge that it was all caused by having maternity put upon me when I was not prepared joyfully to meet its trials and responsibilities, and the consciousness of the terrible outrages that I have been driven to perpetrate on myself and your unborn children, harden my soul, and lower me in my own opinion, so that I do now feel, and shall yet more deeply feel, if this function is still to be imposed upon me, that I am unworthy to appear in society. But for the consciousness that your passion has been, unconsciously and ignorantly, it may be, the primary cause of my misery and conscious degradation, I should scarcely dare to claim the right any more to rest in your bosom as your wife. We have both erred.

"'You love my person; you worship the *animal* in me. If you love not my mind, my heart and soul more, and feel not more reverence and worship for the God in me than for the animal, if I am unworthy and unable to meet the wants of your intellectual and spiritual nature, PERISH ALL OUTWARD BONDS! Tell me, have I no power to hold you by any bonds but the sensualistic? Has my soul no power over you? If this be so, let me no longer seek

to hold you at all. It crushes me, and overwhelms me with conscious degradation, to feel that I have no power over your intellectual and moral nature; that you come to me, caress me, and call me WIFE, only that I may administer to your sensual pleasure, and that you have no fond regard and loving adoration for me, except for my mere outward, physical womanhood. I cannot live so, feeling that your presence and caresses are ever to be but a prelude to the surrender of my person to your animal passion.

"'I know I have powers of soul, which, if suffered to be developed, without this horrible crucifixion, might bless you. I will not yet believe you will turn a deaf ear to this appeal of your wife, who, as you know, has had, and can have, no life apart from you. I pray, with tears, that you will spare me from a maternity which my soul repudiates, and whose sufferings I cannot endure. You will not deny me this privilege, which, more than anything else, I ask of you.

"'Though much guilt is on my soul, through repeated efforts to get rid of the results of your passional relations with me, and save myself from the pain and anguish of a maternity I have felt unable to bear, and of giving birth to children that I do not want, yet I will not despair of salvation reaching me through your love. To live as pure as my aspirations are, and have my life the natural outgrowth of the deep love which I feel and must express or die, would bring us both nearer heaven.

"'I cannot consent to have the woman, *the real soul-and-spirit woman* in me, obliterated. I cannot believe it is my destiny to have the *woman* expunged from my nature. I want to be a strong, pure woman. I want to be lovely to you. Yet, heretofore, the strongest manifestations of love to you have, usually, had little other effect than to arouse your animal nature, and thus have been so turned as to render me unlovely; for a wife must become unlovely and repulsive to her husband, the moment he ceases to reverence her soul, and feels that she is to him but the means of mere sensual gratification.

"'You will acknowledge that there is terrible wrong somewhere. May God show us a Moses to lead us out of this wilder-

ness, this Egypt! You have often chided me for feeling unworthy of your love; reminding me how strange it was, since other and worthy men regarded me highly, and that I did not feel myself unworthy *their* regard. Were there no abuse of our sexual nature, your tender and noble love would so elevate and consecrate the functions of my Womanhood, that I should no more be tormented with that want of self-respect, which, alone, ever causes me to doubt your love, and feel unworthy of it. I feel, at times, that love would not, could not, thus crush my Womanhood; that it would, by intuition, guide you in your passional relations with me, so as never to do a wrong or outrage to my nature, even unwittingly. The feeling which other men's regard awakens in me is not brought down and thus prostituted to sensual gratification, but is awakened only to vitalize and bless soul and body. Help me and save me, by your manly strength, even from myself!

"'I appeal to you, in behalf of myself, of my husband, and my children. Deep and enduring consciousness of guilt and shame must rest on my soul, in view of the outrages I have perpetrated on myself and my unborn children, whom I was reduced to the necessity (as it then seemed to me) of killing before they were born, or of cursing with an existence loathed and detested even by the mother that bore them.

"'My husband! you will, for *my* sake, for *your own sake*, for *our children's* sake, reflect on these things, and send me your reflections. You will respond to this appeal from

"'YOUR LOVING WIFE.'

THE HUSBAND'S RESPONSE.

"'MY SUFFERING WIFE:

"'I have a word to say to you now, such as I never said before. Your letter has revealed you to me as I have never before seen you. It shows me to what utter misery I have brought you;—how, for my gratification, you have descended into the lowest hell.

"'You intimate that I treat other women, personally, more

tenderly and reverently than I do you. That is true: to my shame and regret I say it. And yet, why should I do so? Why should I crush and desecrate you, while I have too much respect for other women ever to think of doing the same to them? There is no reason for it. You are my dearest love. I should treat *you* more tenderly than any others; be more careful of your health, and beauty of body and soul. Of all women, the husband should most anxiously watch over the health of his wife, and most shrink from the abuse and desecration of her physical as well as spiritual womanhood.

"'But I have not been wholly blind to your deep misery. I have seen it, and, at times, feared that I might be the cause. I did not dare ask the cause. Feeling not myself that degradation and misery of which you speak, I did not know how much you suffered; but I should have known, had I not been blinded by passion, and by the false idea that man had a right to the indulgence of his passional nature whenever he wished it, and that, too, without regard to the feelings of his wife, or the welfare of the child that might ensue.

"'True, I, at times, heard your words of remonstrance and entreaty, but they did not touch my heart; my passion made me deaf or indifferent to your appeals to my manhood to spare you from a maternity which you could not joyfully welcome. I was lost in my own hell, and tormented. I was blind; but now and then, glimpses came to me, from your own keen anguish, of the real truth. But the blur of selfish, craving passion, would come over my sight, and I would go on my old way, cheating myself always, and sometimes you, into the feeling that it was all right; that man had a right to that indulgence, whatever might be the conditions of the wife, and whatever her feelings in regard to Maternity. At least, I persuaded myself and you *that I could not help it*, and that my health would suffer unless I frequently held that relation with you.

"'Now that blind dominion of passion is at an end. Your appeal to my manhood has reached its deepest depths. The gratification of animal passion shall no more guide me in my relations to you. That it ever has is my shame, as well as your degrada

tion. I wish you could see my soul as it now is; you would see a revolution in it. The deep wail of your spirit has reached my heart, and I am ready to go up with you out of the perdition into which my uncontrolled sensualism has cast us.

"'You have descended into hell, for my gratification. You have consented to terrible anguish of body and soul, for no higher object than my momentary pleasure. You have sacrificed your body and soul, your self-respect, your unborn children, on the altar of my ungovernable passion. From this hour, I will seek to repair the wrong I have done you. I have forced on you, in contempt of your entreaties, a maternity which could not be otherwise than most hateful to you. I have compelled you to pass through sufferings of body and anguish of mind which you were not ready to meet, and which were all the more severe, because they were imposed by one whom you loved, and who should have known better. I have imparted to you the elements of a new life, when your very soul spurned and loathed them. I have filled your heart with deadly hatred towards the young life, my own child, that was being developed beneath it. I have compelled you to a deed of all others the most loathsome and hateful to a pure, refined and noble woman,—to the *murder* (it should have no other name) of your children, to the murder of *my* children, ere they were born, to save them from the more fearful and horrible doom of an unwelcome and hated existence.

"'Talk not to me of *your* guilt, of your unworthiness to stand by my side, and to tread with me the path of life as a true, noble and loving wife. If you are guilty, what am I? If you feel degraded by the loss of self-respect, what ought I to feel? The fault is all my own. I should have known better, and had a higher appreciation of the passional relation. Had I consulted your wishes as to maternity, had I counselled with you as to when you could, with safety and exultation, take charge of the germ of my child, and naturally develop it into life, had I never imposed on you a repulsive and abhorred maternity, would the stain of abortion now darken your soul? Yes, I see it all:

the deep damnation of the deed is my own, and would to God that the penalty might descend on me; that I could save you, my long-suffering, too lenient and forgiving wife, the pain and anguish!

"'God help me! I am very sick at heart. The bitterness of death enters my soul, as I reflect on the unseen and unexpressed pain of body and desperation and anguish of soul to which my ungoverned passion has brought you. Can you forgive me? Can you again restore me to your loving confidence? Can you ever again respect my manhood, which has brought upon you all this woe? I will, henceforth, comply with the teachings of the book you sent me, and hold my entire nature in abeyance to your wishes and happiness, and in all my passional relations with you, my object shall be your health and happiness, rather than my own gratification. I will be to you an ERNEST, God helping me.

"'Dearest! believe me and trust me now, for I mean what I say, and it shall be done. I have written it here, and this shall be my pledge; and if ever I urge on you a relation that will subject you to the liability of maternity, when you do not call for it, lay this pledge before me, and it shall be respected.

"'We shall yet rejoice together on earth as we never did before. This world may not bring to you entire restoration to health of body, nor peace of mind, nor yet self-abandoned trust in your husband; but the effort to effect this, on my part, shall not be wanting. Believe me, and trust to the love, the faith and energy which your letter, and that experience of Ernest and Nina, have awakened in me. We will together seek the aid of the angel helpers, who never condemn save to restore and bless, and who are even now lifting up and vitalizing the desponding and heart-stricken.

"'Dear wife! look up, and trust — *trust* — TRUST! and with strong nerve, and in conscious pride and innocence, you shall yet stand by my side, and tread with me the pathway of the future, a proud, loving, trusting, joyous wife. Your soul shall yet shine with deeper lustre on my manhood, to elevate and save your conscience-stricken, but not despairing husband

You shall yet be, in deed and in truth, my Saviour, and I will be yours.

"'These are not idle words, but come from the heart of your loving, penitent, yet hopeful and confident

"'HUSBAND.'

"It will do your heart good to know that that husband has, thus far, been true to his pledge; that that wife is now blooming again in comparative health. Hope and triumph are shining in her face, love quickens the intellect, and vitalizes the whole woman. And woman is intuitional, to understand and appreciate a true and noble manhood. You will not wonder, then, that she feels nearer to him, in mind and spirit, than ever before, for now she understands him, and he her. Could they have talked over the subject of passional relations, and understood each other before they entered upon their marriage life, it had saved her years of anguish. May their history be a beacon light to warn others to shun the rocks and shoals that lie, unseen, in the inner depths of wedded life!

"It may encourage you to know that they owe their salvation to *you*, though they allow that I have had a hand in it. True, it was through me that the experience of Ernest and Nina came to their knowledge, but I am quite willing that the author of 'MARRIAGE AND PARENTAGE' should bear the responsibility and have the glory of their redemption. Their names are sacredly private. They would meet you without feeling that you know them. I shall not reveal them further than I have done.

"God speed you in your efforts to vindicate the most sacred and important of all human rights, — *the right of woman to say when and under what circumstances she shall assume the office of Maternity, and the right of her child to a joyous welcome into life.*

"The crime of an enforced and abhorred maternity! Well and truly do you call it, 'THE CRIME OF EARTH.' In whatever light it is viewed, whether in its bearing on the mother, on the

child, on the husband, on home, on society, or on humanity, it is, indeed, THE CRIME OF CRIMES.

"With fervent prayers for the triumph of truth on this subject, I am

Your friend,

———."

My friend, how many wives would thus appeal to their husbands, if they dared? "Sever the last link of the bond that binds her to her husband!" Mere sensualism "the last link" in such a union! I do not like to talk of *chains*, *links*, and *bonds*, in connection with such a relation. Talk of these in connection with slaveholders and slaves, but let them not sully a relation like this. "*The last link*," indeed! Yet it is true; it is, often, the first, and last, and only link in the chain that binds the husband to the wife, in what is called marriage. Man seeks woman as a legal wife, that he may legally and respectably give indulgence, without restraint, to his passion. If the wife seeks to preserve her soul and body from desecration, he threatens to leave her, and seek his gratification where he can find it. She submits, to keep him with her; both of them, unmindful and regardless of the results to the mother and the child. "Perish all outward bonds" of marriage at once, rather than that the relation should continue in this way!

Wives! be frank and true to your husbands, on the subject of maternity, and the relation that leads to it. Interchange thoughts and feelings with them, as to what nature allows or demands, in regard to these. Can maternity be natural, when it is undesigned by the

father, or undesired by the mother? Can a maternity be natural, healthful, ennobling to the mother, to the child, to the father, and to home, when no loving, tender, anxious forethought presides over the relation in which it originated? — when the mother's nature loathed and repelled it, and the father's only thought was his own selfish gratification; the feelings and conditions of the mother, and the health, character and destiny of the child that may result being ignored by him? Wives! let there be a perfect and loving understanding between you and your husbands, on these matters, and great will be your reward.

Maidens! a word to you. Never enter into the physical relations of marriage with a man, until you have conversed with him freely and fully on maternity, and the relation that leads to it. Learn distinctly his views and feelings, and his expectations, in regard to that purest and most ennobling of all the functions of your nature, and the most sacred of all the intimacies of conjugal life. Your self-respect, your beauty, your glory, your heaven, as a wife, will be more directly involved in his feelings and views and practices, in regard to that relation, than in all other things. As you would not become a weak, a miserable, imbecile, unlovable and degraded wife and mother, in the very prime of your life, come to a perfect understanding with your chosen one, ere you commit your person to his keeping in the sacred intimacies of home. Beware of that man, who, under pretence of delicacy, modesty, and propriety, shuns conversation with you on this relation, and on the hallowed function of maternity. Concealment and

mystery, in him, towards you, on all other subjects pertaining to conjugal union, might be overlooked; but if he conceals his views here, rest assured it bodes no good to your purity and happiness as a wife and a mother. You can have no more certain assurance that you are to be victimized, your soul and body offered up, *slain*, on the altar of his sensualism, than his unwillingness to converse with you on subjects so vital to your happiness. In the relation he seeks with you will he, *practically*, hold his manhood in abeyance to the calls of your nature and to your conditions, and consecrate its passions and its powers to the elevation and happiness of his wife and children? If not, your maiden soul had better return to God unadorned with the diadem of conjugal and maternal love, than that you should become the wife of such a man, and the mother of his children.

How much of woman's suffering and degradation, under the horrors of an unnatural maternity, are owing to herself, I will not say. My appeal is to husbands, and I would show them the extent of their responsibility in this crime. Doubtless, woman might save herself much anguish and suffering, if she would approach man frankly, in womanly love, tenderness, and dignity, and open to him the depths of her soul in regard to Maternity, and the relation in which it originates. Men are not all below the brutes, in their nature. If woman were true to *purity*, to justice, to her own nature, and would be just and true to her husband and her children, and freely and lovingly converse with man on these relations and functions, he would, often, with manly pride

and affection, respond to her. On no subject would a true and noble man respond to the words of a pure and trusting woman with more manly pride and dignity, and a more conscious self-respect, than on Maternity, and the relation that leads to it. Let wives, then, be true to themselves, if they would have their husbands true to them!

H. C. W.

LETTER VI.

WORDS FITLY SPOKEN, BY ONE WHO SPEAKS WITH AUTHORITY.

DEAR FRIEND:

Would you secure for yourself, your wife and your children, a pure and happy home? Of one thing, then, you must never lose sight. You now regard your wife as fitted to be your companion, intellectually and socially, as well as affectionally. Be sure that no effort is wanting, on your part, to keep her so. If her intellect becomes stunted, and she be deprived of the means and opportunities for improvement, while you enjoy every opportunity to cultivate and enlarge your intellectual powers, how can she possibly feel herself fitted to be your equal companion?

Let me ask you carefully to read over the "Appeal of the Wife to the Husband," in the last letter. Mark well what she says on this subject; how she feels, as she finds herself losing all power to sympathize in the intellectual aspirations and pursuits of her husband. She, intellectually, was sinking, while he was rising; was growing poorer, while he was growing richer; and he took little pains to impart to her his increasing intellectual wealth. All opportunities for intellectual growth were precluded by the anxieties of maternity, which he,

without a thought for her intellectual welfare, was constantly imposing upon her. Never impose this function upon your wife, at the expense of her intellectual growth. No wife can ever be made intellectually poorer by maternity, and the cares of a mother, when that relation is joyfully welcomed, and those cares are shared by the husband. But how can a wife's intellect ever be expanded with new and noble thoughts, when the physical sufferings and mental anguish of a frequent and an undesired maternity are ever present?

Stay at home with the mother of your children, except when necessary avocations call you away. Share with her the cares, the anxieties and joys, of the nursery. There cultivate your intellectual powers together by reading, and by conversation, — especially, on all subjects pertaining to parentage and the ante-natal, as well as the post-natal, development, education and life of your children. How anxious will every true and loving husband and father be, to unite with his wife and the mother of his children, in the nursery, to impart and to receive all possible light in regard to these matters!

Neither should you ever impose maternity on your wife at the expense of her *social* nature. Never go abroad to enjoy and develop your own social nature, and leave her at home alone in the nursery, preparing to give birth and a worthy reception to your child, or to spend her weary hours in solitude, in anxious watchings over your children, and in longings for your presence and your sympathy. Stay with her, and share with her all the joys and all the sorrows, all the sweet rest and all the weary labors, of a maternity imposed by you, and of

developing into noble men or women the offspring of your mutual love.

But how crushed, intellectually and socially, must that wife become, on whom an ignorant, a thoughtless, or a brutal husband, is ever imposing a maternity from which her soul recoils! Her intellect becomes dwarfed and her social nature dead. How can it be otherwise, especially when driven to the deed of ante-natal murder, to escape the horror of giving birth to children accursed by the mother that bore them? Hope becomes extinct, and the light of her soul goes out in utter darkness!

The following letter must speak for itself. It is nearly a *verbatim* extract from a letter, the original of which is now before me. No man, especially no husband, can read it, and not feel quickened in all that is truly manly, noble and God-like. Of this woman, as to her style and her sentiments, every true man will feel that to be true which the people said of the teachings of Jesus, — "HE SPEAKS AS ONE HAVING AUTHORITY." May her words of power find a response in the heart of every husband and wife, and of every man and woman!

"The subject of an undesigned and undesired maternity, — how it affects the mother towards the child, towards the function of Maternity itself, — these are matters, on which, as a wife and a mother, and a friend of Human Progress, my mind has been deeply exercised since they were first presented to me. The delicate and hallowed beauty with which you invest maternity, and the relation that leads to it, renders it easy for me to impart to you my views on these subjects, while I feel instinctively repelled from any approach to them with most other persons, both men and women.

"The thoughts I have do not flow from my own experience.

I have never given birth to a child not earnestly desired. Yet, being a woman and a mother, it seems to me no difficult matter to judge correctly as to what must necessarily be the emotions and effects produced by such a maternity.

"But I must express my earnest conviction, that any woman, any wife, who permits herself to be made the instrument of bringing into life a new existence, unwelcome to her own soul, must, in some degree, be wanting in that self-respect which is an inseparable accompaniment of, nay, an essential element in, true nobility of character. That woman must feel degraded before her own soul, who, for any cause, in or out of *legal* marriage, suffers herself to be made the means of such an outrage upon her innocent and helpless babe. Better, a thousand times, that she leave her legal husband at once and forever, than allow soul and body to be thus prostituted, and herself to be made accessory to a deed so unnatural and unjust as that of giving birth to a child whose existence is repudiated and loathed by her own heart.

"Public opinion, based on his superior physical strength and (hitherto) superior intellectual development, has accorded to man the dignity of lordship. Looking over the face of the earth, he says, 'See all things for my use, even woman.' And as the Bible, in many of its teachings, as these are explained, sanctions this arrogance, declaring that the 'man was not made for the woman, but the woman for the man,' she herself, the just authority of Nature being educated out of her, and the arbitrary authority of man educated into her, believes it her duty to yield implicit obedience to all the demands of the man to whom she has declared allegiance at the altar;—the *altar*, truly; for there she is frequently offered a propitiation to satisfy the demands of man's unholy passion; and from henceforth this being, created with reason, conscience and intuitions of her own, and for her own guidance, believes it her highest duty to sacrifice all these to the authority and the licensed sensualism of the husband, for whose pleasure she was created, and to 'obey even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.'

"This much may be said to account for the fact that so many women, otherwise excellent and amiable, lend themselves to the

commission of this great crime; a crime against themselves, against their children, against their husbands, against our great humanity. And while thus prostituting their persons according to law (made for this very end, and solely by those who prostitute them), they deceive themselves into the stupid belief that they are leading pure and virtuous lives, and look with scorn and contempt upon the poor sister who commits the same unnatural and revolting deed in an unlawful and less reputable manner.

"Human decrees and enactments can never alter or reverse human obligations. What is wrong without a license or commission from human government, is wrong with such a license. If an undesigned and undesired maternity be a dark and damning sin against the child, the mother, and humanity, against God, without the sanction of the Church, the State, and public opinion, it is a sin of an equally dark and damning character with such sanction. In every case where the act that leads to maternity would be a sin, a foul and monstrous crime, and the shame and infamy of one or both parents, without the sanction of human laws, it would be the same with such sanction, and in a legalized union. Those women, therefore, who, for any cause, allow an undesired maternity to be imposed on them by men holding the legal relation of husbands, and permit themselves to be made the means of giving existence to children whom they do not want, in legal marriage, ought to be, and one day will be, regarded in the same light as those are who become mothers outside of wedlock. If it be wrong for a woman to become a mother, without the consent of Church and State and society, it is wrong for her to become a mother with such consent. If right with such consent, it is right without it. Whatever it is right to do with a civil, ecclesiastical or social license, it is right to do without it.

"If woman's life be made a curse by the constant endurance of suffering, consequent upon a too-frequent maternity, the religious woman often endeavors to stifle the outcries and accusations of reason and intuition by the absurd plea that she 'must have all the children whom it is God's will to send.' Occasion-

ally, one is found weak enough, and wickedly fond enough, to say, as Miss Bremer, with contemptible silliness, makes one of her amiable characters in 'The Home' say, 'that though she had such a large and rapidly increasing family, and her husband's means of providing for it were somewhat limited, yet he *never grumbled*, and was always ready to welcome each new child as it came!' Grumble, indeed! A husband 'grumbling' that his wife has conceived! A father 'grumbling' at the birth of a child! 'Always ready to welcome each new child as it came!' —and this said by a wife of her husband, as the strongest testimony to his manliness and justice as a husband and father, and as the highest reason why she should love and honor him! What man so base, so ignoble, so fallen, and so deserving a dungeon or the gallows, as he who imparts the germ of a new life to his wife, to gratify his passion, and then 'grumbles' because a child is born, and thrusts it from him? Man can give no greater proof of the utter degradation and ruin of his moral nature. Yet not to grumble at a maternity of his own imposing, and not to repel and cast off the babe for whose undesired existence he is responsible, is Miss Bremer's highest conception of manhood!

"But a false religious education is not the only reason why woman weakly and unrightcously yields herself to the base and brutal passion of her husband; for a passion, though all pure and ennobling when its demands are just and naturally answered, becomes most base and brutalizing to men and women, when indulged at the expense of the child, and contrary to the wishes of the wife and mother. As society is now constituted, she is his dependant. The laws make her subservient to his will, while she continues a wife, and all-pervading custom has, in great measure, deprived her of the dignity which an independent ability to engage in business for herself, outside the domestic circle, would confer.

"'*Can do* is easily carried about,' is a pithy old Scottish proverb; and this same 'Can do' is a good and sturdy staff of self-support, when a woman finds that the man on whom she fondly leaned would become to her, not a tower of strength and

a refuge from the storm, but the oppressor to crush both soul and body, and make of her very Womanhood an unworthy thing. Let woman respect herself. She will gain nothing by submitting to wrong and outrage. No wife ever gained or perpetuated the love and respect of a husband, deserving the name, by yielding to his passion, merely to please him.

"It is the popular, but foolish and unthinking belief, that children owe great obligations to their parents for bringing them into life; but is not the contrary the fact, that parents are under the strongest possible obligations to their children to render that being good, wise, and happy, which they themselves have forced upon their child? Assuming this as self-evident, then is it clear that such existence should not be the result of blind, unthinking passion, but of careful, wise and loving design.

"The act in which the child originates is performed, often, solely for the momentary gratification of one or both parents. No thought for the welfare, the physical, mental and spiritual organization and tendencies of the child that may ensue, is entertained. No careful and anxious forethought for the character and destiny of the child is exercised, but the gratification of mere animal passion is the sole object sought. The child comes into being undesigned by the father and undesired by the mother, — the offspring of reckless, selfish, sensual lust, and not of tender, self-forgetting, noble love. How grievous the wrong done by the father to the mother, and by the mother to herself, and by both to the child who is thus thrust into the world by violence! What hope can exist for such a child? The felon's doom was written on his soul before he was born. His parents consigned him to the dungeon or the gallows ere he drew the breath of life.

"The woman who, in youth, is flattered and caressed for the charms of her person, the sweetness of her temper, and the goodness of her heart, when married to a man who thus regards her as but the instrument of his pleasure, soon loses the charms for which she was caressed, and, while the husband is in his prime, she enters upon a premature old age; her physical

strength exhausted by the almost constant suffering and agony attendant upon giving existence to those poor, unwelcome ones. — her beauty faded, her temper soured, her whole soul embittered by a consciousness of her hard lot, and her mental nature stunted in its growth, — for what leisure has she to attend to the wants of her own spirit, while her energies are taxed to the utmost with the care of her living children, who are solely dependent on her, and she preparing to add another to the number? How can she fill the treasure-house of her own soul with 'things new and old,' under all these adverse circumstances, and while the present physical wants of her little ones are constantly clamoring, 'Give! give!' Does not reason, does not justice, demand for woman that she have full opportunity for the development of her own Womanhood, soul, body, and spirit? Has not she, as an individual child of God and member of the human family, a *right* to this? Does not the well-being of such children as she may righteously bring into existence loudly call for a full and *practical* recognition, on the part of every husband and every man, of her right to decide for herself when, how often, and under what circumstances, she shall assume the office of Maternity, or be subjected to the relation that may issue in maternity? Does not the happiness, the best interest of the husband, require it? Does not Humanity itself demand it?

"And how must that woman, in whose soul the theory of passive obedience has not wholly eradicated nature, regard the husband who causes her thus to curse 'the day wherein she was born' a woman? In her inmost soul, she must look upon him as the half-enlightened slave looks upon his master, and bitterly reproach him for victimizing her to his own base passion, and for his own short-lived gratification, irrespective of the woful consequences to her whom he has sworn to cherish, honor and protect. And justly does she thus regard him. No wife can love and honor such a husband. He is to her what the executioner is to the victim, or the slaveholder to his crushed and outraged slaves. She cannot but loathe him.

"Can love do any injury to its object? Must not the wife

become alienated from the husband, who, instead of cherishing her health and beauty, and seeking her happiness, subjects her to the loss of all these, and, instead of honoring, basely enslaves her to his own infamous passion? — who, instead of protecting from evil, exposes her to sickness, sorrow and death, not in accordance with her own free will, her own glad choice, in pursuit of an object worthy and great enough to inspire hope, courage and strength to meet the coming suffering, and the attainment of which shall amply compensate, and cause her 'to remember no more the anguish, for joy' that a new life is given unto her, but simply and solely that his own mean, selfish, animal nature may find present satisfaction? Deserves such a man the blessings of a home of love and harmony, the devotion of wife and little ones? Alas! no; he has planted only curses, and 'whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

"Must not such a wife, too, regard the creative function in both herself and husband with loathing and abhorrence? And did not the power of refusing this unwelcome maternity reside within herself, who could blame her for reproaching even the great Creator for so endowing her with a capacity for unremunerative suffering? And what must be the atmosphere of that house (I will not dignify it by the sacred name of *home*), where the wife and mother regards her own nature as degraded, — her husband the tyrant who degrades, and her children the fruits of this degradation? Is that house a fit nursery for the germs of a noble Humanity? Do not plants there take root which cumber the earth, and, in their turn, fill it anew with those briers and thorns of human kind, which render its habitations places of cursing and bitterness?

"Alas for the poor child of such a parentage! Receiving his very being by a base act of the father, nourished until birth underneath the heart of the mother, whose whole nature protests against its existence, feeding upon her bitterness, hatred, and sense of humiliation, the gall and wormwood of her soul infused into its young being, coming at last into the world destitute of the inheritance of love, — the inheritance justly his own, —

where shall be the resting-place of that child's soul? Around what can it lovingly cling? Even its own mother regards it as an unwelcome intruder; in whose loving bosom shall it be tenderly nurtured?

"Perhaps the mother who bore him used her best endeavor to cut short his earthly existence ere he saw the light; and, failing in this, when ushered into the world, grudges him the care and sustenance necessary to sustain that existence. Or if, as is more frequently the fact, with the actual presence of the helpless innocent in her bosom, somewhat of the mother's heart awakens into life, it is not that rich, overflowing life of love which pours the wealth and fulness of her own being into his. She cares for him as the animal cares for its young in its utter helplessness; and then the weary woman, with many other children about her, and preparing for a new maternity, thrusts him from her as soon as possible, and the little yearling must 'tak the stirk's sta' (the stall of the yearling calf). What can the poor, unwelcome child become? How small are his chances for a virtuous life! If he thinks God has so created him, well may he plead with poor Burns —

> 'Thou knowest thou hast formed me
> With passions wild and strong.'

'Can a bitter fountain send forth sweet water?' 'Where shall I get them?' was the reply of a criminal to Jonathan Edwards, who told him he must have better thoughts.

"Alas for poor Humanity! 'Let there be light,' that man may know that the relation that leads to maternity can only be ennobled when its object is the creation of a new and glorious life; that his passional nature can only derive dignity and beauty from the control of love and reason; that otherwise, it is of the earth, earthy, and debases him below the level of the brute. 'Let there be light,' that woman, in whose soul resides the power, may say to this overwhelming flood of evil, 'Here shall thy proud waves be stayed!' The errors of a false religious education, bad laws, and bad customs, have, hitherto, formed some extenuation for this weak subserviency; but this

ignorance has been tolerated full long, and now the great cry of God and Humanity goes forth calling for repentance, — that 'a new heavens and a new earth may be created, wherein shall dwell righteousness.'"

Man has a heart, and that heart can be reached by the loving and earnest appeal of a true woman. Words, such as those contained in the above extract, will never be uttered in vain. They are the true oracles of Nature's God, as revealed in the soul of the wife and the mother. Let the father hearken to the mother as she pleads, in behalf of her children, that they may not be cursed with an unwelcome existence. Let the husband listen to the prayer of his wife, that she may be spared a maternity whose responsibilities she is not prepared joyfully to assume. Humanity utters her indignant protest against man, when, to gratify his sensual passion, he perpetrates the greatest possible outrage against woman, as a wife and mother, and as a woman, by subjecting her to the necessity of cursing her child with an abhorred existence, or of killing it before it is born. Protestations of love and devotion must ever seem insulting and disgusting to a true woman, from a man who would thus recklessly inflict upon herself and her child this foul wrong. In vain does such a man prate of his regard for the purity and honor of woman, of his reverence for marriage and parentage, and of his desire for the elevation of our common humanity; his life, in the sacred privacy of home, is an insult to his wife, an outrage upon the mother of his children, an act of living injustice and cruelty to his offspring, and a crime of

deepest infamy against all that is true, pure and noble in human nature.

Man will not always be thus heedless of the health and happiness of his wife; he will not always be thus unjust and inhuman to his innocent and unconscious children, by making them objects of dread, of loathing and cursing, to the very heart under whose pulsations they receive their ante-natal development. He will subject his manhood to the health and happiness of his wife and children; and in doing so, will receive the richest reward earth can bestow, — the perfect trust of a devoted wife, and the loving respect of a healthy, happy and joyous offspring.

H. C. W.

LETTER VII.

THE DREAD ALTERNATIVE — ANTE-NATAL MURDER, OR AN UNWELCOME CHILD.

DEAR FRIEND:

The following experience of a woman, given in her own words, will make its appeal to all that is pure, manly and noble in manhood. It is the cry of anguish from woman's riven heart to man, to save her from the agony and blighting curse of a maternity whose sufferings she is not prepared joyfully to meet, and from which her entire nature shrinks with dread and loathing; to save her from the revolting alternative of killing her child before it is born, or of giving life to one whose very existence is loathed by her. Several times, the crime of an undesired maternity had been perpetrated upon her by her husband, and each time the child had been killed by herself or by a doctor, before its birth. She was asked how she felt under these outrages, and what was the result on her physical, social and spiritual nature. The following is her answer:

"How did I feel? I felt that I was committing a damning sin. My soul shrank from the deed with intense horror and loathing. The remonstrances of a guilty conscience I could not silence. I had submitted to the relation in which maternity originates, thinking it my duty, as a wife, to do so whenever my husband demanded. I told him that my very soul shrank

from maternity; that I was not yet prepared for its responsibilities and agonies, and begged of him not to impose that burden upon me till I could joyfully welcome it, which I felt that I should, in due time. But he heeded not my prayer. He insisted on the relation. Conception and maternity ensued.

"My soul died within me. An ever-present loathing of the new life that was being developed within mine was in my heart. My own soul, and the God whose voice was heard within, repudiated its existence. I could not help the feeling. The spirit of murder, towards the unconscious child in embryo, was ever present to me; yet my soul shrank with horror from the deed. Shall I kill my child before its birth, or give existence to one whose birthright inheritance is *a mother's curse?* was the question I found myself debating continually; — for my curse was on its very life.

"I consulted a woman, a friend in whom I trusted. I found that she had perpetrated that outrage on herself and on others. She told me it was not murder to kill a child any time before its birth. Of this she labored to convince me, and called in the aid of her 'family physician,' to give force to her arguments. He argued that it was right and just for wives thus to protect themselves against the results of their husband's sensualism, — told me that God and human laws would approve of killing children before they were born, rather than curse them with an undesired existence. My only trouble was, with God's view of the case. I could not get rid of the feeling that it was an outrage on my body and soul, and on my unconscious babe. He argued that my child, at five months (which was the time), had no life, and where there was no life, no life could be taken. Though I determined to do the deed, or get the 'family physician' to do it, my womanly instincts, my reason, my conscience, my self-respect, my entire nature, revolted against my decision. My Womanhood rose up in withering condemnation. And, after the deed was done, I felt that I could never respect myself again; that I could never again appear in society; that if I did, all that was pure and true in manhood and womanhood would shrink from me as a polluted, disgusting object.

"I tried to cast the blame on my husband, who had imposed the necessity upon me. I tried to feel that the outrage and the guilt were all his own; that, had he heeded my prayer, and dealt justly by me, I should never have been driven to the dread alternative of ante-natal murder, or of giving birth to a child I did not want. But I saw and felt, that however great the wrong he had done to me, the fact still remained, — my nature was outraged, if not by my consent, yet by my sufferance. I knew I could have saved myself from maternity, had I been resolute to do so; and that, having submitted to the relation in which it originated, I had no right to add to the outrage by killing my child. I felt myself to be a crushed, prostituted, abandoned woman. Can any apology be offered for a woman who commits the crime of ante-natal murder, after she has voluntarily yielded to the relation that leads to maternity?

"Maternity, with its prospective agonies and its abhorred responsibilities (for I did not yet call for a child), was again thrust upon me in a few months; but I shrunk from destroying my child again. I gave birth to two living children. Then my soul rebelled against having more; but my husband was deaf to my prayers and my tears, though he himself was opposed to my having any more children, and insisted it was my fault if I did, though he persisted in his right to his sensual indulgence. How could I avoid having more children, when he was continually demanding of me the relation which naturally leads to offspring? 'Kill them,' was his reply, 'before they are born, or do something to prevent conception!'

"His injustice and heartless selfishness cut me to the quick, — stung my very soul. 'This is the man,' I said to myself, 'who has promised to love, cherish, and *protect* me; who expects me to love him tenderly and evermore; whom I have promised to love till death separates us; and yet, this is the man who, without regard to my wishes and conditions, insists on his right to gratify his passion, though at the expense of my body and soul!' My soul rose in rebellion against him. It became evident to me, that the gratification of his passion was his only object in seeking me as a wife; that this was the only claim he had upon me,

or wished to have, and that he had no higher idea of marriage than as a means of licensed, reputable indulgence.

"I became desperate. I could not leave my children. I knew if I left him, I could give no reason for the step, except my aversion to having maternity thrust upon me in defiance of the demands of my own nature, and I knew that all would condemn me, if I left him to escape from such an outrage, as this was not considered a wrong to me, but his right. Every feeling of my soul revolted against his taking possession of my person, without my consent, to blight and curse my body and soul to gratify his animal nature.

"I came to the conclusion to stand by my own rights, and defend my person against his sensualism. I told him, candidly, how I felt, and that I must protect myself, in this respect, for he would not. I told him I was living daily in deadly fear of his passion, and of maternity; that the relation in which it resulted had become repulsive to me, and that he had brought me to view myself as a loathed, abject and prostituted woman. His wrath was roused; and finally, from fear of breaking up my family and having my helpless living children taken from me, I submitted to a hell which had no mitigation, until separation gave it to me.

"In my intercourse with men, I have found few who did not view marriage and a wife as my husband did, as a mere means of sensual gratification. Companionship, intellectual, social, and spiritual growth, and elevation, they think little of, in connection with a wife. They see no soul, no God, in the wife; only the mere animal, to administer to the brute in them."

In the presence of a just and pure God, and before the laws of Nature that are designed to govern all conjugal relations, does marriage give to the husband any right over the person of the wife, or to the wife any rights over the person of the husband, which neither had before? Has a husband any more right to *demand* of his wife the surrender of her person to his passion, than he

has to demand that surrender of any other woman? True marriage creates necessities in each, and gives vitality and intensity to wants in each, which the presence, the love and companionship of the other can supply; but a pure conjugal love creates no rights, and never thinks or talks of rights over the property, the body, or the soul of the loved one. Indeed, a true man, whose soul is filled with a holy conjugal love for a woman, would scorn and loathe any personal caresses or surrender from her, when he knew she gave them merely from a sense of duty, and only because she believed he had a right to them. A man must be shorn of all true manliness, and become utterly debased and prostituted, before he can, in or out of legal marriage, accept the personal surrender of a woman to his passion, when he knows the surrender is made solely to please him, or from some false idea of duty. However tenderly, truly and devotedly a man may love a woman, she is not, therefore, under obligations to receive any expressions from him, except such as her own necessities demand. Whatever manifestations of yourself you would make to your wife, before offering them, create in her the necessity of demanding and of receiving them. If your nature prompts you to reveal yourself to her in the relation that leads to maternity, control yourself, and be sternly true to yourself, to your wife, and your child that may ensue, until, by all other loving and endearing manifestations, you have created in her nature an earnest call for maternity. Then would she joyfully accept of you the germ of a new life, and, for the sake of her husband and her child, consecrate all the energies of her soul to its true development.

Read the following. The extract is from a letter written by one who has proudly and nobly filled the stations of a wife and a mother, and whose children and grandchildren surround her and crown her life with tenderest love and respect. She has seen many of the companions of her girlhood victimized, and literally offered up on the altar of sensualism, in legal marriage. Their husbands demanded passional gratification as their *right*, irrespective of consequences to wife or children, and they submitted as a *duty*. Their career was short, in many cases, and in others, they live but wrecks of their former selves. A relation that should have ennobled and saved them, has crushed them to death:

"It has often been a matter of wonder to me, that men should, so heedlessly, and so injuriously to themselves, their wives, and children, and their homes, demand at once, as soon as they get legal possession of their wives, the gratification of a passion, which, when indulged merely for the sake of the gratification of the moment, must end in the destruction of all that is beautiful, noble, and divine, in man or woman. I have often felt that I would give the world for a friendship with man that should show no impurity in its bearing, and for a conjugal relation that would, at all times, heartily and practically recognize the right of the wife to decide for herself when, how often, and under what auspices, she should be a mother, or enter into the relation that leads to maternity.

"It is often said in my hearing, by women, that a woman who is not willing to submit her person to the passion of her husband, whenever he shall demand, is not fit to be a wife; and if she becomes so, and her husband forsakes her for other women, and neglects his children, he is to be pitied, and the wife condemned and held responsible for all the results. The law gives the husband cause for divorce if the wife persists in withholding her person from his embrace, which, when thus thrust upon her

against her wishes, becomes loathsome and damnable. The community of women generally endorse this state of things, and are educated to believe that God gave man such fierce passions that he cannot control them; that they must be gratified whenever excited, though at the expense of woman's health and happiness, and the happiness of her children.

"Will man ever be pure, noble and strong enough to protect woman, in or out of legal marriage, against his own passion? Must woman always put herself on the defensive, to protect herself against man? Will man never see the fact as it is, that all that is manly, true, great and noble in his nature, must be preserved and perpetuated only by the protection of woman against being victimized to his sensual gratification? O man! thou art all noble and God-like, to the loving and trusting heart of woman! She longs to come to thee, to save thee, and to be saved by thee. But thou mayest be assured that thy heaven, in time and eternity, can be secured only by saving woman from prostitution. While she is regarded by thee as the means of sensual gratification, rather than as the vitalizing, redeeming power of thy manhood, she will bring desolation and death to thy soul, and thou to hers. To man, woman looks for strength. How she longs to rest in him,—how she longs to give herself to him in a self-abandoning trust,—and how she longs that he may ever be worthy such a trust, the heart of the true woman and wife alone can ever know. But when woman trusts and man proves weak, and betrays her longing and trusting heart, no words can express her sickening, crushing disappointment and anguish. Often do women prefer to die a lingering and loathsome death, rather than confess themselves mistaken and disappointed in those whom they have trusted."

The following extract from a private letter speaks the thought and feeling of every true woman. Weigh well what the writer says of woman's right to protect herself against the reckless passion of man. Also, what she says of woman' wer over man, and of man's readiness

to yield to that power, when woman has the courage to appeal to his love:

"I cannot conceive of a woman, who has willingly and joyfully received into her own being the germ of a new existence, with the noble design of rendering that existence happy, ever committing this foul deed [abortion]. The cause of it must always be, the previous submission to an unwelcome maternity. If this can be justified, if the laws of man and of God oblige woman thus to degrade and violate the sacredness of her own person, it follows that she, being thus outlawed, placed outside the protection of all law, human and divine, has a right to protect herself from further evil, and even avenge herself for the past, as she best can; and that whether by taking the life of her husband or of his child. Can this be denied as a necessary consequence? and does not the bare statement of it disprove the monstrous assertion that God, either by Nature or Revelation, has thus placed her at the disposal of man's will? No living creature is created without some means of self-protection; and in woman, that weapon is *Self-Respect*.

"It makes my soul sick, even to a loathing of Humanity, to think of this unnatural deed, and its foul cause. Alas! men and women do not worship their own natures. 'Let us eat and drink,' they cry, 'for to-morrow we die!'—'Let us sacrifice the *human* to appease the *brute*.'

"Does not the crime of murder consist mainly in the fact, that every soul born on this planet has an inherent right to all the development it can receive in this, its birthplace, and when deprived of corporeal existence, is robbed of this right? If this be true, then ante-natal murder is of the same nature and character as post-natal murder. Yet for the one crime, the criminal is accounted, by our judges, and by the sentiment of the public, to be worthy of death; whereas, these same judges, and this same public, incite to the commission of the other, by subjecting woman to an abhorred maternity.

"Where is the wrong? In the *man*, first of all. He it is who subjects the woman to this abhorred maternity, and for his

own sensual gratification. For him there is no apology, save the miserable one that passion overcomes love and reason, the animal triumphs over the man, the sensual over the spiritual.

"In the mind of the woman who allows herself to become thus basely subservient to her husband's will, how loathsome is the memory of those progenitors who bequeathed to the man a nature so mean, selfish, tyrannical and animal, and to the woman a nature so tamely, so ignobly subservient and unresisting! Where is the remedy? In the awakening of woman to this great evil. Woman must assert and maintain her rights in regard to maternity, ere any rational hope can be entertained for the future. I cannot believe that man would become the fierce, selfish tyrant he now is, if properly appealed to before his heart becomes hardened by indulgence,—that he who, in the general transactions of life, is just and honorable, would become the selfish despot at home, if the woman who is his wife fully respected her nature as woman, and her individual sacredness.

"Let woman, then, be appealed to. Let her 'arise from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments,' for then, and not till then, shall her light break forth as the morning, and Humanity become all glorious. But while woman, by law, custom, and religion, is made subservient to man's sensual gratification, without regard to her feelings and wishes, while law, custom and religion bestow on man the right to inflict on woman a maternity whose sufferings and responsibilities she is not prepared joyfully to welcome, and while woman, to gratify man's sensualism, is subjected to the atrocious alternative of ante-natal murder, or of giving existence to children whom her inmost soul repels, there can be no hope of the regeneration and redemption, the elevation and happiness of the race, and of peopling the earth with nobler and more beautiful types of manhood and womanhood."

How many husbands are unwilling to have their wives get knowledge as to their right to decide when they shall become mothers, or be subjected to the relation

that leads to it! Let woman get light on this, if on no other subject, if she would be happy in her home. Slaveholders count him most guilty who attempts to teach their slaves their right to be free. So many husbands curse bitterly the man who would enlighten their wives in regard to Maternity, and the relation that leads to it. But true and earnest souls are pledged to spread light on this subject. Read the following:

"Married women are often as ignorant, and about as degraded, as to their rights and duties, respecting the function of Maternity and the relation that leads to it, as are the slaves of the South in regard to their rights. Many husbands are as unwilling that their wives should get light on these subjects, as are slaveholders that their slaves should be enlightened in regard to their condition. They must not be allowed to know that they are not morally bound to submit. They must have no will of their own; and by their weak subserviency, they even say to their husbands, 'God thy law, — thou mine,' as to Maternity and the relation that leads to it. How can they know that there is any other and nobler way, than to have children and complain, and complain and have children, and submit themselves to their husbands' sensualism with entire servility and silence?

"Never has any man spoken a truer and more needed word than you have spoken, or held out a more helpful hand to woman, to enlighten her ignorance and to raise her from degradation, than you have done, in your work on 'Marriage and Parentage.' To me and my husband, that book has been as a message direct from God, to guide us in our most sacred relations in the sanctuary of our home. We wait anxiously for your work on 'The Crime of an Undesigned and Undesired Maternity.' We can secure for it a wide circulation in this region; for the *ante-natal* history and education of human beings, in

its bearing on their *post-natal* character and destiny, is becoming a subject of paramount interest in many true and earnest souls."

The following testimony to the wide-spread practice of ante-natal murder is from one who has carefully noted the progress of this crime, and its dire effects on the physical and moral conditions of those who perpetrate it, and on their husbands and their homes:

"A friend of mine told me that she should have killed two of her children, ere they were born, had she known how. She tried, but could not succeed. The children whom she tried to murder were born alive, and are now living; but they are stamped with the spirit of revenge and murder. They struggled into life against the spirit of murder, and the maternal curse must remain upon their souls till eternity shall cast it out. This friend and myself made an estimate of the number of our near neighbors who, to our knowledge, had killed one or more of their children before they were born. Six, out of nine, had done the deed, or had procured the services of a 'family physician' to do it for them. They all justified the practice of ante-natal murder. A doctor in a neighboring village, who ever frowns upon this unnatural deed, assured me, recently, that he had been applied to by six different women in this little village, in one week, to murder their children before birth. Some of these women were the most fashionable, wealthy and respected women of the town, and two of them were church-members. They all insisted it was less criminal to kill children before they were born, than to curse them with an unwelcome existence.

"My husband and I have done what we could to circulate your work on 'Marriage and Parentage' in this region, and, already, it has brought comfort to many homes where happiness had been well-nigh wrecked by the unnatural demands of husbands, and by their imposing maternity on their wives when they were unprepared to meet the consequent suffering."

The following shows how common, in cities, is the practice of ante-natal murder. What a testimony against husbands who impose on their wives maternity, without design, and contrary to their own wishes, and the wishes of their wives!

"A physician in a neighboring city told me that it was very common, among the more fashionable and wealthy among whom he practised, for husbands, who wished to have their wives always ready for society, to bring them to him and offer large sums of money to induce him to procure abortion, and to prevent conception. Invariably, those who practise this outrage on themselves lose their health, become low-spirited, feel humbled and prostituted, and are made irritable, complaining, nervous invalids for life, and wholly incapacitated for the enjoyments of society. I know many who practise this foul crime. Those who do it generally lose their self-respect, become ashamed of their womanhood, and shrink away from society, conscious that they deserve to be shunned or pitied, by all that is pure and noble. O! why, why do husbands impose on their wives an alternative so horrible? Why do women ever submit to a relation that subjects them to the possibility of a maternity, whose sufferings they are not prepared to meet? They had better starve, better die!

"Yet, in my ignorance, to please my husband, and to escape the agonies of an undesired maternity, have I allowed this most unnatural outrage to be perpetrated upon myself and my unborn children. I know the agony of soul, and the conscious shame and degradation woman feels, when, having allowed her husband to impose on her a maternity which her soul abhorred, she resorts to ante-natal murder to avoid giving birth to a child she does not want. I know no woman can practise this outrage on herself, or allow another to practise it upon her, without injury to body and soul. No woman, after doing this deed, can stand before her own soul, or before her fellow-beings, as she did before.

"The unwelcome child! — maternity, abhorred by the mother and without design by the father! — you call this 'THE CRIME OF EARTH!' It is. Lay it open to the eyes of all, in its bearing on the purity and happiness of home, and on the character and destiny of the race. '*Let there be light!*' In the name of God and humanity, and by all that is pure and lovely in man or woman, and by all that is sacred and dear in the relation of mother and child, 'LET THERE BE LIGHT!'"

The following extract is from a wife and mother, who, with her husband, is laboring earnestly and efficiently to elevate the human type. They are ever active to surround themselves and their children with knowledge, with just, pure and ennobling views and principles in regard to marriage and parentage. They think this the *only* way to save their sons and daughters from the deep wretchedness and degradation of inharmonious conjugal relations, from polluted homes, and from the crime of giving existence to children they do not want. Mark! the woman, whose modesty is shocked at every effort, however truthful, earnest and delicate it may be, to enlighten husbands and wives in regard to the natural laws designed to govern Maternity, and the relation that leads to it, does not feel at all shocked by *ante-natal* murder. She can even justify herself in doing this most foul and monstrous deed: —

"When you lectured in this place, on 'The Unwelcome Child,' one lady went out of the house, affecting to be greatly shocked by what you said. Yet, that same woman who went out muttering curses on you, for warning husbands against imposing an undesired maternity on their wives, has, to my knowledge, had such a loathed and wretched burden thrust upon her twice, in two years, and each time has killed her child

before it was born. Another lady, my near neighbor, who thinks such subjects should never be agitated, publicly, has three times, within so many years, committed the crime of ante-natal murder. The first child was seven months old when she killed it. She told me this herself. She is now but twenty-four years old. She has one living child, and this must suffer for life, from the outrages perpetrated upon it by the mother, ere its birth. She says she cannot, and will not, have any more children yet. She says her husband insists on his gratification, and she cannot prevent conception, and has no alternative but to kill the children before they are born, or give existence to those whom her soul repels, and thus entail on them a mother's curse. She justifies herself by saying, it is no greater sin against the child, against herself, against society, and against humanity, for a mother to kill her child before it is born, than to give birth to it when her own heart loathes its existence.

"She is one of a large class, who are *thus* trying to reconcile themselves to *ante-natal* murder. Still, she feels degraded, as all must who do this deed. They *are* degraded. A deed so unnatural and so cruel can never be perpetrated without deep injury to the moral nature of all concerned. The spirit that would kill a child before birth, would kill it after; the spirit that would commit *ante-natal* murder, would commit *post-natal* murder. But what shall be said of the husband who subjects his wife to this fearful alternative? Can man do a deed meaner, more selfish, more satanic?"

The organic and constitutional tendencies of those who are born are fixed. It may take a mighty effort to correct their birthright tendencies to disease and to crime. Thousands say, as the writer of the following extract says, — "We were lamentably ignorant of the natural laws of Parentage when we married. Would that light had come to us sooner. But we will not allow the hap-

piness of our children, and our children's children, to be wrecked for want of knowledge." The following is the testimony of a true and earnest woman, and loving and happy wife and mother: —

"Before your visit to this place to lecture on 'The Ante-Natal History of the Human Being, and its influence on his Post-Natal Character and Destiny, in the body and out of it,' my husband and myself had talked over the subject of Marriage and Parentage a great deal; but we never had had it presented to our minds in so strong and clear a light before.

"When I was married, I was most lamentably ignorant of the laws of my nature, especially of those designed to govern Maternity. But my husband, in regard to maternity, and the relation that leads to it, is a most kind and considerate man, and I love and honor him all the more for it. I wish your book on 'Marriage and Parentage' had fallen into our hands before our children were born; we might have given them more loving hearts, and nobler natures, in body and soul, by understanding better how surrounding influences affect us before birth. But I am thankful for my sake, and for my children's sake, and for the sake of the mothers that are to come after us, that your views are being so widely made known through your writings and your lectures. If mothers better understand the laws of Nature designed to govern maternity, and the relation in which it originates, they will be more careful of themselves, for the sake of their children.

"I have heard many mothers express their thankfulness for your visit and your conversations and lectures here. You have given hope and gladness to many anxious and despairing hearts. The mother of six little ones, and who is about to add another to the number, said to me, 'Such instruction is exactly what men and women need.' I felt sorry for her; yet not so sorry for her as for the unborn babe; for I know its existence is most unwelcome to the mother.

"When I think of the great and good work in which you are

engaged, my heart blesses you, and bids you God-speed, for it is a subject of the deepest interest to me as a wife and mother. Before this question of Maternity, and the relation that leads to it, so far as the character and destiny of the race are concerned, in this and in the future state, all others sink into insignificance. It is most painful to hear woman, in her vanity, her shallowness, and intellectual, social and moral debasement, array herself against the only movement that ever can raise her to a true estimate of herself as the mother of the race. Till the right is conceded to her to determine for herself when, how often, and under what conditions she shall be a mother, or be subject to the relation that leads to maternity, woman can never become the true and proud mother of a healthy, beautiful and noble offspring. While she is a mother from necessity rather than from choice, she must feel herself an abject, degraded being, and her children must partake of her degradation. My husband and myself bid you God-speed! Our hearts are with you."

The following fact was communicated by a wife and mother, as having occurred under her own observation, and in reference to her own daughter. Let every father and mother read this, and see to what extremities their daughters are often driven, to save themselves from a maternity whose sufferings they are not prepared to endure: —

"My only daughter was married to a warm-hearted, impulsive young man of twenty, when she was but sixteen. I besought him not to marry her to gratify his passions, and endeavored to set before him and her the certain consequences of a union formed for mere sensual purposes. She was, and is, an innocent, artless, and frail creature. She was in poor health, and I knew that absence from him preyed upon the life of her body and soul. They married, and he took her to a distant western State.

"In about four months, she came home to me, by his consent, a haggard, emaciated wreck of a woman. The first moment she saw me alone, she said to me, 'Mother, they say I am about to become a mother, and my husband wished me to come to you, to see if you could not prevent it.' I told her it was impossible; she was so feeble, that the effort to kill the child would kill her. She wept, and prayed me to save her from the suffering and anguish of child-birth. 'I have,' said she, 'the most loathsome and horrible feelings about it. I think it would be a greater sin to give birth to a child, with the feelings I now have towards it, than to kill it before it is born. The very thought of giving birth to a child fills my soul with deadly enmity. My constant prayer is, that the child may be destroyed. I would rather die with it, than to give it birth under such circumstances. What will the child be, after it is born, if I give birth to it with the feelings I now have, and which I cannot help?'

"I earnestly tried to dissuade her from destroying it for several days; but she became so desperate, that I feared she would kill herself, and knew that if the child was developed and born, under such a state of mind in the mother, it must inevitably be a desperado, or a fugitive and vagabond on the earth. She had not one feeling of natural desire for her child, but only sought its death. I took her to a doctor, noted for his ante-natal murders, and he advised that the child should be killed,—and he killed it. Her husband came after her, and was thankful the deed had been done.

"But the husband had no thought of restraining his passion, and insisted on its gratification, though maternity should ensue. In a few months, maternity was again imposed upon her. She has no power of endurance. He and she again wished the child to be destroyed, and it was, by the same doctor. With all this dreadful suffering and anguish of his wife, he insisted on his gratification. He had no higher conception of marriage, than as a means of mere sensual indulgence. To own her body, and use it for his gratification, he deemed his right as a husband. She regards maternity with repulsion, and the relation that

leads to it; still, like most women, she thinks it a great misfortune that husbands cannot gratify their sensualism without imposing on their wives the necessity of abortion, or of giving birth to children they do not want, and she lives in constant fear of losing the affection of her husband, if she does not quietly yield to his passion.

"As to her husband, she really thought he could not control himself without great injury. He had convinced her that the laws of God and man gave him the right to that indulgence with his legal wife as often as he desired, and if conception ensued, it was no fault of his; that he was blameless, as to any wrong done. I could not but feel disgusted and horrified, to see all that was lovely and good in my child thus sacrificed to a man's low sensualism. When a husband thus deliberately treats his wife as a mere means of sensual gratification, it blunts all that is refined and noble in her, and makes him an object of disgust to her. And she, if social in her nature, must exercise the love-principle or starve, and she wastes it on others more congenial, who will respect her womanly nature. Often this is the cause of her throwing herself into temptation, and becoming a victim of the base passions of those who are ever on the watch for such. Thus she is driven, step by step, to utter prostitution, — all from being made the slave to the sensual passion of the husband. Had she had a spiritually-minded and noble husband, or the courage to assert her rights, her home would have been her heaven, and her progress and improvement, not her degradation and ruin, the law of his life."

Read the following. It must be an inhuman and monstrous religion which can countenance a crime so unnatural as enforced maternity, or ante-natal murder: —

"Those among us who are members of our churches, and are counted most exemplary patterns of purity and piety, to my certain knowledge, practise ante-natal murder, and they justify

themselves by saying, 'It would be a greater sin against children to entail on them the curse of an abhorred existence, than to kill them before they are born!' These pious women affected to be greatly shocked, when, in your lectures here, you appealed to their husbands to control their passions, and spoke of the crime of enforcing on women a maternity whose responsibilities and sufferings they were not prepared joyfully to welcome. But Nature is ever true to herself. No matter who they are that perpetrate this outrage, whether rich or poor, high or low, pious or impious, whether in the church or out of it, they become weakly, and incurably diseased; their constitutions soon break down under this abuse, and they pass away by consumption, or some nameless, wasting disease, and their death is, by most people, attributed to a 'wise and good Providence.' The husbands, the real murderers, are pitied, and soon comforted by taking other wives, only to kill them in the same way. How can a woman feel proud of the nature God has given her, after thus abusing it? She cannot. She must feel in her soul that she is degraded, and her very existence becomes a loathing to herself. Who drives her to this inhuman deed?—who, indeed, but the very husband to whom she so fondly looked for protection from all harm?"

Dear Friend,—The following positions seem to me to be clearly sustained:

1. That it is a crime of the deepest dye, for a husband to impose on his wife, without design, a maternity whose responsibilities and sufferings she cannot joyfully endure.

2. That it is a sin for a husband to urge his wife to submit to a relation which may result in an undesigned and undesired maternity.

3. That no wife can stand proud and stainless before her own soul, who allows herself to come into a relation with her husband which may entail on her the curse of an unwelcome maternity, and reduce her to the revolting

alternative of ante-natal murder, or of giving birth to a child whose existence is abhorrent to her soul.

May not every child, in justice, demand of its parents, as a birthright inheritance, (1) a healthy body, free from all tendency to disease; (2) a healthy soul, free from all tendencies to idiocy, and insanity of intellect or of heart; (3) a designed existence, the result of a wise and tender forethought, and not of blind, impetuous, selfish, sensual passion; (4) a love origin, rather than a mere sensual, animal origin; and (5) a joyous welcome into life? As you cast your little ones afloat on the ocean of eternal being, be careful to secure to them this outfit; then may you hope to see them bravely and successfully outride the storms of life, and enter into a true and endless rest. But what hope is there for these poor, diseased, suffering little ones, the offspring of a loathed and hated maternity, whose very existence, ere they were born, was made accursed by the mothers that bore them, and by the fathers, whose only thought or aim in the act in which they originated was mere sensual gratification? God pity these poor, unwelcome ones! No earthly parents welcome them into life with loving smiles. In whose warm, loving bosom can they be tenderly cherished? To whom can they look for love and sympathy? Again I say, GOD PITY THESE POOR, UNWELCOME CHILDREN!

That your home may never be cursed by an undesigned and undesired maternity, or by an unwelcome child, is the anxious wish of

Your friend,

H. C. W.

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